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# INTERNATIONAL REVIEW

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## OF THE RED CROSS



Published every two months by the  
International Committee of the Red Cross  
for the International Red Cross  
and Red Crescent Movement



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# INTERNATIONAL REVIEW OF THE RED CROSS

## CONTENTS

MAY-JUNE 1990  
No. 276

<b>THE RED CROSS, THE RED CRESCENT AND COMMUNICATION</b>
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*Special feature: The Red Cross, the Red Crescent and  
Communication* . . . . . 173

### **I. COMMUNICATION IN THE MODERN WORLD**

**Sylvie Boiton-Malherbe:** Communication in the world today: one-  
way distribution or two-way sharing . . . . . 177

### **II. A COMMUNICATION STRATEGY FOR THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT**

**Michèle Mercier and George Reid:** A global Red Cross and Red  
Crescent identity . . . . . 191

169

### III. COMMUNICATION AND NATIONAL RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT SOCIETY ACTIVITIES

#### 1. Communication and dissemination

##### *THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL RED CROSS*

<b>Edilberto H. Angco:</b> Communication to promote dissemination . . . .	201
---	-----

##### *MOROCCAN RED CRESCENT*

<b>Ben Saoud Badreddine:</b> Practical aspects of information and dissemination. . . . .	205
--	-----

#### 2. Communication and community services

##### *MALAWI RED CROSS SOCIETY*

<b>Grace Paliani:</b> Communication to promote community services . . . .	216
---	-----

#### 3. Communication, recruitment of members and fund-raising

##### *THE NETHERLANDS RED CROSS*

<b>Marcel P.L. Vergeer:</b> Communication to raise funds for humanitarian activities . . . . .	220
--	-----

#### 4. Communication and public at large

##### *AMERICAN RED CROSS*

<b>Ann Stingle and Bud Good:</b> Communication excellence and the public at large . . . . .	230
---	-----

#### 5. The Red Cross, the Red Crescent and the media

##### *SALVADOREAN RED CROSS SOCIETY*

Information services and the media: an ongoing dialogue . . . . .	238
---	-----

##### *BULGARIAN RED CROSS*

<b>Encho Gospodinov:</b> The Red Cross and the media: mutually beneficial relationship . . . . .	243
--	-----

#### IV. INFORMATION SUPPORT PROGRAMME

##### *FINNISH RED CROSS*

<b>Helena Korhonen:</b> Support for information services in developing National Societies . . . . .	249
---	-----

##### **INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE REDY CROSS**

Towards a humanitarian mobilization: <b>ICRC President visits Africa</b> .	259
War surgery seminar (Geneva, 30 March-1 April 1990) . . . . .	263
<i>EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES:</i>	
Africa — Latin America — Asia — Middle East — Europe . . . . .	264

##### **IN THE RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT WORLD**

<b>World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day 1990</b> . . . . .	272
Statutory meetings in Geneva (30 April-4 May 1990). . . . .	274

##### **MISCELLANEOUS**

Second Regional Symposium on International Humanitarian Law (Kinshasa, 14-17 March 1990) . . . . .	277
The Yemen Arab Republic ratifies the Protocols . . . . .	279
Death of Professor Paul Reuter . . . . .	279

##### **BOOKS AND REVIEWS**

La protection des journalistes en mission périlleuse dans les zones de conflit armé (The protection of journalists on dangerous assignments in areas of armed conflict) (Sylvie Boiton-Malherbe). . . . .	281
<b>Addresses of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies</b> . . . . .	286

## ARTICLES SUBMITTED FOR PUBLICATION IN THE *INTERNATIONAL REVIEW OF THE RED CROSS*

The *International Review of the Red Cross* invites readers to submit articles relating to the various humanitarian concerns of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. These will be considered for publication on the basis of merit and space.

- Manuscripts will be accepted in *French, English, Spanish, Arabic* or *German*. They should be typed, double-spaced, and no longer than 25 pages.
- Footnote numbers should appear superscript in the main text, and footnotes should be typed, double-spaced, and grouped at the end of the article.
- Bibliographical references should include at least the following details:  
a) for books, the authors's initials and surname (in that order), book title (underlined), place of publication, publishers and year of publication (in that order), and page number(s) referred to (p. or pp.); (b) for articles, the author's initials and surname, articles title in inverted commas, title of periodical (underlined), place of publication, periodical date, volume and issue number, and page number(s) referred to (p. or pp.). The titles of articles, books and periodicals should be given in the original language of publication.
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<p><b>Articles, studies, and other signed texts from non-ICRC sources published in the <i>Review</i> reflect the views of the author alone and not necessarily those of the ICRC.</b></p>
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## THE RED CROSS, THE RED CRESCENT AND COMMUNICATION

*There is something extremely paradoxical about the modern world. Different societies have become increasingly interdependent, the solutions to the problems facing them impossible to separate, yet at the same time the diversity of those societies is very marked, whether it stems from their growing disparity in terms of development or from the desire of individuals and communities to affirm their identity. As the twentieth century draws to a close, the challenge is to lay the foundations of the true spirit of human fellowship required to reduce disparities and inequality while respecting differences and identities.*

*Every society communicates. Whether communication is seen as the relationship between individuals or as a means of informing and educating, it plays a key role not only in spreading knowledge and permitting communities to understand each other better, thereby easing tension, but also in facilitating freedom of expression between individuals and between groups, and in safeguarding the cultural identity of all.*

*In this respect, the components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement have traditionally projected one unique image. Above and beyond the cultural and ideological differences inherent in any universal body, the Movement has an identity and a specific nature based on its Fundamental Principles and its humanitarian mission.*

*But it does not suffice simply to observe that this spirit of fellowship exists, or to take a passive pride in the Movement's special nature. Both must be upheld and brought home to the public. The Movement must learn how to present itself as a whole and develop the means of promoting its principles and action.*

*This is why, in October 1989, the Council of Delegates adopted an Information Policy, the aim of which is to strengthen the Movement's aptitude to communicate, internationally and nationally, a clear and coherent image of its mission and thereby develop its capacity to accomplish its tasks and increase its public support.*

*The International Review of the Red Cross therefore thought it would be useful to have a special issue on the origins of the Movement's Information Policy, what it means for the components, and its future prospects.*

*As in the past,<sup>1</sup> the Review wished to associate National Society, League and ICRC leaders and specialists in this feature, which does not claim to be exhaustive. We nevertheless hope that our readers, having read the articles and taken note of the examples and suggestions they contain, will be in a better position to assess what can be considered to be a true strategy for communication within the Movement.*

\* \* \*

*In Part I of the feature, on communication in the modern world, Sylvie Boiton-Malherbe, professor of communications law, examines the role of communication in terms of the distribution of knowledge. She emphasizes not only all the means available for fostering, with technological support, both greater circulation of a richer variety of information and respect for cultural identity, but also the harmful effects – factors of inequality and tension – which communication can have.*

*Mrs. Boiton-Malherbe comes out very strongly in favour of a true sharing of information know-how between developed and developing countries. This will need concerted efforts, an open mind, honest dialogue, and the adaptation of knowledge to different cultures, for it is true that only education and training can help change mentalities and further dialogue (see p. 177).*

\* \* \*

*Concerted efforts, co-operation and dialogue are also key elements of the Movement's Information Policy, analyzed jointly in Part II by Michèle Mercier and George Reid, respectively in charge of communication at the ICRC and the League Secretariat (see p. 191). This policy, which is based on an Identity Statement and firmly rooted in the Movement's Statutes and Fundamental Principles and in an Identity*

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<sup>1</sup> See *IRRC*, "Tenth Anniversary of the Protocols additional to the Geneva Conventions (1977-1978), No. 258, May-June 1987, and "Development and Co-operation within the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement", No. 264, May-June 1988.



*tity Programme, aims to strengthen the Movement's capacity to communicate specific and effective messages about what it is, what it does and why, while emphasizing the Movement's special nature.*

*As the authors underscore, words must lead to action. The Information Policy must be a true action programme, an integral part of each component's daily activities. It must enable the National Societies, the ICRC and the League to respond to circumstances each in accordance with their own specific identity, while nonetheless serving the same cause: to create the necessary conditions to reach the victims and alleviate human suffering.*

\* \* \*

*What part does communication play in the development and promotion of the humanitarian activities of the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies? To answer this question, the Review asked several National Societies from different parts of the world to examine and assess how interpersonal relations, for example between their volunteers and the communities they serve, and the means of information available to them help to promote their humanitarian activities. In Part III of the feature, the National Societies accordingly describe what experience has taught them, the obstacles they have encountered and how they overcame them. They also tell how they intend to implement the Movement's Identity Programme in order to reinforce their own information policies.*

*The National Societies of Bulgaria, El Salvador, Malawi, Morocco, the Netherlands, the Philippines and the United States (see p. 201) explain how their information services or their volunteers' daily interaction with the communities can help to promote dissemination of international humanitarian law and the Movement's principles, to develop community services in rural and urban areas, and to back recruitment and fund-raising efforts. They shed some interesting light on the importance of the Identity Programme, nationally and internationally, in eliciting public support and on the beneficial effects of co-operation between the National Societies and the media in their countries.*

*These articles, through the many examples they give, have the merit of setting forth the problems facing the National Societies: structural weaknesses, lack of resources, the effects of the growing number of humanitarian organizations, which can sometimes be prejudicial to the coherence of the Movement's image. All the authors to varying degrees are aware that National Society activities can really be devel-*

*oped only if the National Societies have a strictly defined and consistent information policy.*

\* \* \*

*Part IV of the feature focuses on the future, specifically support for the information services in developing National Societies (see p. 249). Helena Korhonen, Head of Development Programmes at the Finnish Red Cross, reminds the reader that information is not an end in itself. It is above all a support service, a means of promoting Red Cross and Red Crescent principles and activities, and therefore an integral part of development. On the basis of her personal experience in Africa, the author assesses National Society development assistance and outlines an Information Support Programme for National Societies. She emphasizes aid in planning and budgeting skills, the production of suitable promotional material and above all the training of communicators. Such a programme implies a true partnership between operating and participating Societies, one based on the sharing of knowledge and know-how, on respect for cultures and traditions, and on a long-term commitment.*

#### ***The Review***

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## COMMUNICATION IN THE MODERN WORLD

### Communication in the world today: one-way distribution or two-way sharing

by Sylvie Boiton-Malherbe

A hazy or changeable concept, communication in its modern form as a technique for sending and receiving messages does not fit into any single or standard discipline. It extends outside the areas in which attempts are made to confine it, from the range of application of the humanities to the operational zones of telecommunications empires. After the ethnologists and sociologists, the linguists and the systems experts, the cyberneticists and the psychiatrists had attributed diverse meanings to it, communication in the broad sense and in its day-to-day reality entered its operational period in the 1980s with the new technology of information and communication.

Whether understood as an interpersonal relationship or as a by-product of information supplied by the media, communication<sup>1</sup> covers a process comprising three components: sender, receiver and message. Whatever the importance of each of these elements in relation to the others, it is recognized that communication is first and foremost the *distribution* of data, of knowledge, from one or more senders to one or more receivers. In interpersonal relationships, the partaking of the message at a particular moment generates communication in the etymological sense of “communicare”, to have in common, which implies *sharing*.

Destined to bring about the greatest pooling of knowledge of all time, communication might be considered a universal instrument

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<sup>1</sup> In the singular, since the plural in its original sense refers to means of communication by air, sea and land.

which appeared at a providential moment for entering the era of sharing. Since under the triple pressure of population growth, the decline in food resources and the production of all kinds of wastes, sharing is no longer an option but a necessary, will communication "*urbi et orbi*" be capable of lessening inequalities or will it become a means of exacerbating them? Will it become an instrument of peace, or a source of conflict for the have-nots of the electronic age?

## *PART ONE*

### COMMUNICATION, THE DISTRIBUTION OF KNOWLEDGE

After the calligraphy of the mediaeval scribes and the galactic expansion of Gutenberg's printing process, communication, by introducing electronics, has reinvented writing and its uses. It has introduced a new type of human being, whose visual range is extended by the camera and the camcorder and whose manual skills are multiplied by the computer. It forges a new link between individual and machine and simultaneously creates a new relationship with knowledge. Through its advantages and its dangers, communication has redefined the individual.

#### **A. The advantages of communication**

Communication moves in time but modulates it, organizes it while merging with it, governs it but reinvents it: time zones coexist with satellites, tides with cables. A new dimension, a new language have come into being, a new interconnection of the earth's elements and inhabitants. Communication potentiates and implements, stage by stage, from telegraph to satellite, the programme for imparting news. In so doing, it acts as a relay for the law, which organizes and safeguards it.

Communication is an idea, a figure, an image, music! It fascinates and so catches the attention of the individual through the senses; it captures the imagination, which it nurtures, transmutes and transcends. By enabling people to express themselves in their diversity and complexity, communication discloses identity, it undermines and alters the notion of stranger.

## 1. Communication in the service of the law: the free flow of information

"Economic and political developments, coupled with striking progress in transport and telecommunications, have led to a vast increase in the volume of international communication and exchange of information as well as in the international movement of persons and the circulation of educational, scientific and cultural materials. Global communications networks, expanded by the development of satellite technology, provide the possibility for instantaneous exchange of news both by word and image among all countries linked to the systems."<sup>2</sup>

Communication has thus become a worldwide phenomenon. Agreements concluded between continents and between countries, with the connections that make it possible, now and in the future, to transmit messages by cable, satellite and, later, networks, facilitate the free flow of information day by day, its smooth functioning guaranteed not only by technical management but also by respect for the law.

The notion of "the free flow of information" is a comparatively recent one, first used about fifty years ago. During the 1930s, in fact, the propagation of information as completely and freely as possible seemed the only way to combat false news and war propaganda and so to safeguard peace. The universal propagation of information was thought sufficient to enable the nations to understand each other better and to respect each other more.<sup>3</sup>

The requirement of "accuracy of news in relative terms", in the terminology of the time, took it for granted that a multiplicity of news items was the only remedy against their possible inaccuracy. This

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<sup>2</sup> *Thinking ahead — UNESCO and the challenges of today and tomorrow*, UNESCO, Paris (1977), p. 333. Another example is the use of the geostationary satellite. States without their own satellites have reserved space (see World Administrative Conference on Radiocommunications, use of the orbit or geostationary satellites and the planning of space services utilizing this orbit, ORB. 1988, Geneva, 29 August-6 October 1989, also the virtually worldwide broadcasts of the European Broadcasting Union resulting from reciprocal agreements negotiated with the sound broadcasting organizations in all the countries of North and South America, in the Arab countries, in the countries of Eastern Europe and those of Asia.

<sup>3</sup> Like the absence of news, news of a tendentious or inaccurate nature represents a threat to peace by keeping up "artificial hatred among nations by means of the printed word" (Stephan Zweig, *Les Nouvelles littéraires*, 6 August 1932): A panel of journalists was set up in 1931 to pass judgement on those responsible for war propaganda. It was part of the "Peace Triptych", as the League of Nations (peace), the International Court of Justice (justice) and the Honorary Tribunal of Journalists (truth) were known at the time. See Boiton-Malherbe, Sylvie, *La protection des journalistes en mission périlleuse dans les zones de conflit armé*, Editions Bruylant, Editions de l'Université de Bruxelles, Brussels, 1989, pp. 73-115.

criterion may therefore be considered as underlying the principle of the free flow of information, a principle that has since become a point of reference in international law. The principle is also based on the legal instruments pertaining to human rights: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1956), the European Convention on Human Rights (1950), the American Convention on Human Rights (1969), and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (1981), all of which form part of the law of peace.<sup>4</sup>

It is therefore in the context of the overall programme for maintaining peace, whose very purpose requires it to take the diversity of peoples and their cultures into account, that the future possibilities of communication must be evaluated.

## **2. Communication reveals identity: the expression of cultural diversity**

Just as the identification of an individual constitutes one of the most fundamental links with the group, so the identification of a culture as being different from others represents the reality and the proof of its existence. Communication plays a basic role in shaping the expression of identity, in handing on traditions to members of one culture, and in conveying identifiable images to those of other cultures. The identity of a society, of a culture or of an institution in fact constitutes a "leaven for the future" and the finest of incentives. For it is in remaining faithful to their own values and principles that societies and institutions are able to grow in perfect harmony, to develop and to keep genuine dialogue alive among themselves.

In this context, advanced methods of communication — in particular, audiovisual methods — are more than ever capable of reaffirming the cultural identity of various countries; but to do this, access to the media and the methods used must not be barred by insurmountable financial and technical obstacles.

Helping to overcome such obstacles is, of course, the task of international organizations in general and in particular of UNESCO, whose Constitution notes that the States party to it have decided to develop

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<sup>4</sup> *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, Article 19; *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, Articles 19 and 20; *European Convention on Human Rights*, Article 10; *American Convention on Human Rights*, Articles 13 and 14; *African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights*, Article 9.

and multiply relations between their peoples in order to reach better understanding and acquire more detailed and reliable knowledge of their respective customs.<sup>5</sup>

It cannot be too often stated that education and training using the various forms of communication are indispensable for access to respect for cultural identity and to safeguard values. Thus communication is seen as a decisive factor in the battle against illiteracy, the promotion of continuous training and rural education, the teaching of practical and professional skills, cultural development and its dissemination beyond the country's borders, also the improvement of institutional facilities and of planning.<sup>6</sup>

But is there enough stress on the fact that literacy programmes, together with cultural development, environmental protection and instruction in practical skills, require constant adjustment and updating? Research into the humanities and the social sciences (anthropology, geography, history, sociology, demography, etc.), like strictly scientific and technical resources, becomes immediately accessible through communication. Hence communication is seen to be both *a means of revealing cultural identity* and *a device for spreading existing knowledge*.

It may thus be said that communication shapes knowledge through its techniques and introduces new techniques for imparting knowledge.

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<sup>5</sup> In this context, the most recent UNESCO programme of October 1989 (*Communication in the service of humanity*) has the merit of pointing out that "the new world order of information and communication" had as its purpose to make a major contribution to the freedom of expression and communication, based on consensus. Moreover, the programme provides for enhancement of the International Programme for Dissemination and Communication (IPDC), created in 1980 on the initiative of the western nations, also more aid from the latter for improving means of communication in developing countries and adapting them to local conditions.

<sup>6</sup> Experiments in "total development" will be recalled (these involved taking into account all systems of communication in planning education). At the UNESCO regional conferences in San José, Costa Rica (1976), in Kuala Lumpur (1979) and in Yaoundé (1980), discussions on national policies were part of the debate on self-reliance, a concept inseparable from the demand for diversity and cultural identity. This concept has been enfeebled by the very people who talk about it, since the famous "national communication councils", made up of various components of civil society, have received no encouragement from the States since the conferences. "This state of affairs, in many cases, showed that far from being the adversary of the private sector, the State, already divested of its power of arbitration, had joined the ruling classes, that small proportion of society bound up with transnational capital, in growing reluctance to consider the demands of society as a whole with regard to communication". Cf. Mattelart, A.; Delcourt, Y.; Mattelart, M., *La culture contre la démocratie*, La Découverte, Paris, 1984, p. 120.

Knowledge is both its purpose and its means, its cause and its effect. But it also involves dangers, and not only those of computerization.<sup>7</sup>

## **B. The dangers of communication**

A number of recent surveys have shown that despite (or because of) the tremendous technical possibilities in relation to data handling and the genuine efforts at co-operation in the world, the flow of information shows a serious disparity between the transmitting sources. Information continues to emanate chiefly from a small number of technically advanced and highly industrialized countries towards the rest of the world and, to a great extent, the flow of data, and the supply of equipment and technical materials form part of international commercial transactions which, while they guarantee essential services and the transfer of technical know-how and experience, pose problems of cultural identity and of technological dependence.

The sheer size of the audience reached by mass communications media, especially radio and television, and the ease and rapidity with which information and ideas are able to spread throughout the world regardless of frontiers, arouse growing concern about the content and quality of what is published and broadcast, and about the influence of mass communications on individual citizens, on communities and on relationships among nations.

For all these reasons, some authors imagine the human being of the future as a nomadic "Walkman", because of the ease of transporting the technical means of communication, typified by the pocket radio/tape player with earphones; others, in contrast, see the future human being as totally immobile and passive in front of a huge television screen. Without being unduly alarmist about the potential dangers of communication, it is desirable to mention some of the harmful effects on individuals, in their private lives and as consumers, without prejudging the consequences that might ensue unless compensatory processes arise to regulate them automatically. Naturally, acceptable criteria must be established as to the rights, duties and responsibilities of professional communicators, both institutions and individuals.

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<sup>7</sup> The term computerization being understood, like the earlier term industrialization, to cover all economic, social and legal modifications that arise when technical changes take place.



## **1. The dangers for citizens as private persons**

The development of communications technology in the administrative, military and medical spheres is capable of eroding public freedoms and individual liberty in all their forms: freedom of expression and association, freedom of movement, to be considered essential alongside the right to privacy.

Vigilance is necessary, not only to safeguard these rights and freedoms but also to strengthen legal machinery and legislation on the subject. Here two basic principles collide: the right to respect for personal privacy and the right to ever-growing information. The latter is considered not only as the right to be informed but also as the right to have direct access to a body of public and private data, something made feasible by technology and by general access to computer files.

The use of electronics and computers in communications in fact increases the potential for controlling individuals, to such an extent that the threats to personal freedoms foreseen by George Orwell in his novel *1984* might well come to pass, since the parallel uses that might be made of the data concerned are unknown. The files of a data bank, for example, could be used to pirate products or processes, or for abusive and/or illegal operations; or they could quite simply be subject to erroneous handling.

## **2. The dangers for citizens as consumers**

Consumers are more or less knowingly victims of the publicity machine and all other types of “doctored” information aimed at them. In audiovisual communication, for example, the skill in “montage” makes it more and more difficult for the consumer to distinguish between the basic message and its presentation, these being further modified by the place they occupy within a whole group of messages. For instance, the camera is an extension of the eye, thus the choice of the object or scene filmed is bound to have an effect on the spectator. And observation through television is increasingly replacing direct observation.

This is one aspect of the more general problem of representing reality, which is reduced in size — and therefore nearer — while being presented in various and special dimensions (order of importance of subjects, choice and duration of sequences). In other words, information without the slightest claim to impartiality can be presented as the truth: instead of “It’s true, I read it in the paper”, people say “It’s

true, I saw it on television". The difference is a significant one, since it enables the viewer to think, because of the images seen, that he has actually witnessed the event; yet the images show only a part of the reality. This communication makes eye-witnesses, as it were, of virtually everyone; and an eye-witness becomes involved much more easily than a reader or even a listener. This accounts for the trend towards "vote-catching ploys", the spread of sensationalism in all spheres, and disinformation.<sup>8</sup> Other adverse effects are proliferating opinion polls (the loser audience of show politics),<sup>9</sup> the abuse of multiple-choice questionnaires, etc.

It may be argued that the axiom of interpersonal communication ("It is not possible not to communicate")<sup>10</sup> is currently extending beyond communication between individuals and occupying all social structures under the influence of technological means. Because of their impact on different audiences (taxpayers, voters, consumers, etc.), these means lead irrevocably to the excessive use of communication as a way of "selling" a personal image, the prerequisite for social success.

Technological progress appears to enable everyone to benefit from information, but this is received in very unequal measure: there is either too much or not enough, especially worldwide. The overabundance of data has adverse effects (information taken out of context; fashionable topics; the failure to interpret or reflect on the event reported; etc.). The absence or relative lack of information is the cause of people or countries becoming marginalized or isolated. This uneven flow of apparently generalized information would suggest that its distribution considered solely for profit can lead to inequality and even injustice.

A new understanding of communication in the broad sense and in the concrete meaning of dialogue and sharing might be capable of minimizing the worst aspects of the consequences that lie ahead.

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<sup>8</sup> One of the adverse effects of the process is that it eliminates the time vital to the basic work of a journalist, that was formerly available to verify information. A recent example is the reporting of a mass grave discovered in Timisoara; checking later showed that it was not what it was made out to be.

<sup>9</sup> "The daily bludgeoning (in the strict meaning of the word) of public opinion by the media through opinion polls is a perfect example of the way in which the profession of purveyor of information has deteriorated", *La communication, victime des marchands*, La Découverte, Paris, 1989, p. 63.

<sup>10</sup> Raised to a principle by the researchers of the Palo Alto school. Cf. Bateson, G., Birdwhistell, R. and Goffman, E., *La nouvelle communication*, Seuil, Paris, 1984, pp. 27-61.

## PART TWO

### A TIME FOR SHARING

The danger that technological progress will further widen the existing gap between developed and developing countries implies that the time has come to halt the widespread wastage of energy sources, whether investments or human potential, teaching facilities, cash or know-how.

The prospect of losing acquired advantages or of bad management of potential resources should be a reason for vigilance, now and in the future.

There should be immediate acceptance of new reflexes, such as the systematic use of joint consultation, so that a mental rapprochement can gradually be brought about.

However, in the medium and long term a genuine change in mental attitudes through education and training must be envisaged.

#### **A. Basic current concern: joint consultation**

The aid that has to be given to the least privileged countries can be beneficial in the long term only if it takes into account the advantages that already exist; it is on to these, as on to the parent stem of a plant, that the buds of future growth must be grafted.

This operation means abandoning the associated ideas of *benefactor and beneficiary*, a relic of the feudal world of protector and protected, widespread everywhere and still deep-rooted in conduct and reflexes. The attitude of its protagonists has facilitated and then condoned a system of aid conceived by one side only. However, since it is a two-way process it requires both sides to be jointly responsible not only for formulating the messages but also for wishing to achieve a genuine exchange of ideas.

#### **1. Desire for authenticity**

The current slide towards increasingly "visible" materialism, translated by modern communications into a kind of worldwide pattern of consumer society, might well foster dangerous combinations. The manicheism that seeps into all comparative thought will probably continue to exist in mental reflexes, according to which developed and/or industrialized = good, whereas undeveloped and/or non-industrialized = inadequate.

The imperfect aspect of such prefabricated ideas needs no demonstration, but the remedies seem few, at a time when the sheer quantity of information also brings about personal rejection based on opinions and reactions generated at the speed of a television commercial.

Nevertheless, it may be hoped that relationships will become truer and deeper if the exchange of ideas is placed on a new footing.

In such an exchange, understanding is relative to the way in which the message is heard, i.e., intercepted, quite as much as to the way in which it is addressed to the hearer. The exchange in communication, indeed, comprises not only what is said but also, partly, what is not said but is perceived through the attitude accompanying it, which sometimes conveys more information than the actual words.

The authenticity desired by the person requesting aid is therefore the closest possible description of that person's *real* needs at a specific moment, however difficult it may be to attain. Indeed, there is much food for thought in some of the failures due to lack of communication when aid has been given, in particular the idea that the aid was not really wanted, since it was decided unilaterally. Just as an authoritative attitude, whether explicit or implicit, should be eschewed by those providing aid, so a passive attitude by those receiving it is the proof that true communication — that is, the exchange and sharing of ideas — has not been established. The perception of messages, whatever their nature, by those for whom they are intended, through reading, the mass media, communication in general, is in reality a *reconstruction* based on a variety of mental and emotional materials inherent in the recipients. It is not a kind of overlay but a unique assimilation that "identifies" the new data by comparing them with former ones. This reconstruction is a genuine process.

During an exchange, it is essential to allow time for listening to the other party's message, in order for communication to be established or to continue. This listening process is momentary self-forgetfulness.

## **2. Listening: a step towards authentic communication**

Listening therefore means not merely hearing without understanding, not imposing one's ideas without knowing the other party's wishes, not teaching or administering without discovering the visible or hidden deficiencies or needs; it may also involve staying in the background and remaining discreet and respectful.

While listening consists in not regarding oneself as the sole point of reference and in accepting the criteria of others, it is also expressed

in research. An attitude rather than a principle, listening is shown in the intellectual sphere by tolerance, which assumes that open-mindedness to the views of others is a precondition for communication. It is an attitude, but not a passive one: it is dynamic in adjusting to realities, whether familiar or unknown, an adjustment necessary for sharing knowledge and practical skills. It is a two-way process, each party coming halfway to meet the other. This approach is symbolic both of interdependence and of "otherness".

If this approach is applied to "communication as sharing", the means of working out a new pattern of aid to be dispensed in the future, two additional effects may be hoped for.

One is the reforming of the code under which aid is currently dispensed, i.e. in accordance with data gathered locally as elements of reflection and construction. The other effect is to make it vital for those receiving aid to reformulate the request in the general context of their culture in the widest sense, including their philosophy. All these requirements would result from the concern for authenticity on each side.

## **B. Indispensable for the future: investment in education and training**

It is needless to emphasize that understanding between individuals or peoples is fostered by mutual knowledge. The course of action described above aims to achieve mutual acceptance by teaching methods that will develop a perception of "otherness" as being an element of diversity and richness. Education and training, therefore, thanks to the varied methods offered by the new ways of communication, could help to arouse, especially among young people, the realization of their difference in relation to the numerous models that exist in the world and also as compared with the stereotypes imposed on them today. The awareness of belonging to a culture and that of its complementarity with other cultures should be built up together, based on better knowledge of the characteristics of each.

### **1. Knowledge suitable to different cultures**

The adjustment of theoretical and practical teaching to local conditions may benefit from the new methods of communication, particularly audiovisual aids.

Nevertheless, it is to be hoped that care will be taken to avoid

exporting, along with the new techniques, adverse or uncontrolled effects that have already been analysed and found regrettable.

The imprinting of messages and knowledge in the minds of those receiving information builds up their intellectual and psychological capital, since, as has been pointed out, the perception of new elements of knowledge gives rise on each occasion to the recreation or recombination of the knowledge previously acquired by each person.

It is well known that in certain highly structured traditional societies, educators have reservations about knowledge and skills from the outside. If errors of interpretation, misunderstandings, possibly even distortion of the original intention or rejection by the beneficiaries are to be avoided, the message accompanying any programme for disseminating knowledge must not only be clear and intelligible to the recipients but must also strike a chord in their own culture and system of values.

It should be stressed that instruction aimed at changing mentalities should be given as early as possible in the educational syllabus, at the same time as theoretical and practical courses. Just as the absence of certain sounds in their mother tongue makes it harder for some children to learn another language containing such sounds, so the notions of equality, tolerance, altruism, etc., are unlikely to spring up accidentally or spontaneously in human beings, whose nature is egocentric, unless the basic criteria are inculcated from childhood onwards.

There is an ambiguity here in that transplantation of the above notions may well be contrary to the habits or cultural reflexes that are otherwise to be safeguarded. It would seem that only by highlighting the complementary nature of universal values and of local traditions can their parallel teaching be justified.

## **2. Learning to respect individual rights: changing mentalities**

The attempt to accustom people to others who are different, behave differently or come from another country, a desirable approach in educational methodology, includes two other elements. First, it tends to show the great diversity of cultures and traditions, also of conduct by individuals within them. In so doing, however, it reveals the other side of the coin, which is the similarity of primordial human reactions towards life and death, God and nature, hatred and affection, war and peace. Thus, the dialogue sought in order to discover others also brings the discovery of self and of the affinity between fellow human beings.

The singling out of elements of comparison enables thought patterns to be discerned that do not always align with the usual religious divisions, as if here and there a universal system of ethics already existed.<sup>11</sup>

These convergences of convictions and behaviour form the foundations of a universal conscience, of which human rights are merely the political and legal aspect. This conscience also encompasses individual rights in the broadest sense, both in their "humanitarian" and in their "environmental" connotation, now that the problems in both contexts overlap: dwindling food resources, industrial pollution causing ecological damage on a planetary scale, e.g., desertification and diminution of drinking water; the manufacture and use of nuclear, chemical and bacteriological weapons; genetics engineering; etc.

This universal conscience, unquestionably more necessary today than ever before, might be fostered by the use of ever-improving methods of communication in a spirit of sharing that is already an integral part of the joint action process, indeed induces it.

It is to be hoped that the gravity of the problems will lead more or less naturally to a return to authenticity or its modulating appearance in spheres where it is still unknown. Communication, essential to dialogue, is capable of laying the foundation of understanding among nations, soon no longer a choice but a necessity. It must, in fact, be the language spoken by tomorrow's citizens of the world.

### CONCLUSION

With its advantages, used to ensure a genuine flow of information all over the world to all individuals and all cultures, and despite the dangers it holds for citizens and consumers, will communication become the new divinity of the future? Improving machines gives greater control of knowledge, but does not increase the free choice of those using them; better tools benefit those newly versed in the use of automatic telecommunications, while excluding the "poor relations" of the electronic era.

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<sup>11</sup> Jean Pictet, to demonstrate the universal character of the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, stated that "humanitarian principles belong to all peoples and take root under all favourable conditions. When we bring together and compare different moral systems and dispose of the non-essentials, that is to say their special peculiarities, we find in the crucible a pure metal, the universal heritage of mankind". Jean Pictet, *The Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross — Commentary*, Henry Dunant Institute, Geneva, 1979, p. 11.

Some people regard communication as an advance comparable with the invention of the wheel, the stirrup, the mill or the steam engine, but it may legitimately be asked whether it is not something more.

If communication, thanks to technological progress, is now becoming a better method of propagating knowledge, which is a recognized factor in personal development, it must be assumed that its improved propagation is not merely quantitative but also qualitative. This implies not only an increase in knowledge and ensuing experience, with its various economic and cultural implications, but also the achievement of personal fulfilment in terms of developing and giving expression to one's own inherent abilities. Such a process involves the spiritual dimension of the human being.

Unless the gaps are closed, it is unsure whether the sounding board of earth's communication will resonate to peace or war, profits or sharing, helping or ignoring. All should be given the chance to express their own kind of truth, i.e., their own authenticity, while listening and paying heed to the truths of others, thus creating dialogue, mutual discussion, and sharing.

And what greater expression of affinity is there than sharing?

**Sylvie Boiton-Malherbe**

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**Sylvie Boiton-Malherbe**, who was born in Lyon, France, is a Doctor of Law of the State (highest level of degree in France) and holds a diploma in advanced studies of political science, also degrees in history, geography and sociology. She taught constitutional law and public international law at the Administrative Training Centre of Ouargla, in Algeria, from 1972 to 1973. She was a researcher with the Directorate for Human Rights of the Council of Europe from 1982 to 1984. At present she is Professor of International Law at the Institut d'Etudes politiques of Lyon University II, where she teaches information and communication law. She has published *La protection des journalistes en mission périlleuse dans les zones de conflit armé*, (1989).



– II –

**A COMMUNICATION STRATEGY  
FOR THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS  
AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT**

**A global Red Cross  
and Red Crescent identity**

**by Michèle Mercier and George Reid**

In 1987 the Council of Delegates, recognizing the “solidarity of image” which exists between the various components of the Movement worldwide, invited the ICRC and the League to explore with National Societies *“new and more systematic ways of promoting, whenever circumstances allow, public awareness of the Movement as a whole rather than its individual parts”*.

Consequently, the ICRC and the League established a working group of communications specialists to draft proposals on the subject. Extensive research work was commissioned, in particular through external experts recruited by the American Red Cross; recommendations were received from 62 National Societies; interim proposals were approved by information staff from throughout the Red Cross and Red Crescent world at the Second Communications Workshop in Varna in June 1989; and finally in October 1989, the Council of Delegates unanimously adopted the “global approach to communications” contained in the joint ICRC/League report on “The Information Policy of the Movement”.

**Information Policy of the Movement**

The Information Policy is essentially a practical programme aimed at strengthening the Movement’s ability to communicate a clear and consistent message internationally. It is based on an Identity Programme which:

- examines the Movement's strengths and weaknesses, always looking for those elements which are unique among humanitarian organizations,
- assesses how the Movement views itself, and how it is viewed by its publics,
- examines those factors, external and internal, which will make it both easier and more difficult to communicate the Movement's message in future,
- identifies the audiences with whom the Movement needs to communicate so that clearly tailored messages can be targeted to each of them.

After this process of analysis was completed, a concise Identity Statement—firmly rooted in the Statutes and Principles of the Movement—was formulated as the foundation upon which an effective, focused communications strategy can be built. This Statement contains the essence of what the Movement is, what it does, and what it stands for. A practical works programme for promoting a common Identity was then devised as a constituent part of the Information Policy.

At a time when the world is rapidly being “shrunk” by new communications technology, the Policy provides a strategic base for the information and public relations activities of the Geneva institutions and of National Societies, thereby helping to promote a consistent image of the Movement internationally.

### **Public perceptions of the Movement**

Among the 62 National Societies which responded to questionnaires on the Identity Programme, a number submitted the results of public opinion research. This was supplemented by work done by a multinational advertising agency through its network of offices worldwide.

While the process was not exhaustive, and is still continuing, a number of key public perceptions appear regularly in the findings:

- The studies show that a very large proportion of the population in most countries recognize the name of the national Red Cross or Red Crescent Society.
- People generally rank the National Society as top in terms of which “charitable” organization they think is doing the best job in helping people. But the Red Cross and Red Crescent is not ranked top in terms of which organization the respondents felt most

committed to nor to which they give the most money. (“In terms of giving”, commented the advertising agency, “this means that the Movement is seen as big, well-established, not well focused and not in need of people’s money or membership”).

People are unsure why the Red Cross or Red Crescent Society needs donations, or where the money goes.

- Many people believe that the National Society is an agency of the government, or a Swiss organization, or “something to do with the United Nations”.
- Most people are not asked to be a part of a National Society, to volunteer or to give money.

These common elements of understanding—or lack of understanding—have to be addressed and clarified by the Movement’s Identity Statement.

Moreover, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is tightly interwoven with the fabric of the world. It must be particularly sensitive to those global trends which are going to affect the services it provides. Any Identity Programme must therefore strengthen its ability to meet human needs in the new millennium.

## The Identity Programme

The purpose of the Identity Programme is to increase public understanding and support for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and its work. Having examined internal and external factors bearing on its mission, its strengths and weaknesses, it provides the focus and sets the tone for all communications to external audiences. *“It provides”,* in the words of the Information Policy, *“a foundation for what we say and the way we say it”*. It summarizes what we want people to feel about the Movement.

*“Our communication must be people-focused, creating the clear perception that they are what matters most. Our communication must also reflect compassion and commitment. The tone of our communication cannot be arrogant, bureaucratic, superior or aloof. Photos of charts or buildings, stories using lofty institutional phrases simply do not deliver the message that the Movement is made up of people who care about people in urgent need and about protecting human life and dignity”.*

In an age when there is increasing competition among humanitarian organizations, the Identity Programme must also emphasize the unique strengths of the Movement, and in particular:

- the universally recognized symbols
- the common mission transcending cultures and boundaries
- the long history of protecting human life and dignity
- the ability to work virtually anywhere in the world
- the caring and competent members.

By clearly formulating “who we are, what we do, and why”, the Identity Statement underscores the mission and principles of the Movement:

### THE IDENTITY STATEMENT

*The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is dedicated to protecting human life and dignity worldwide, thereby promoting lasting peace.*

*The 250 million people of the Movement help those hurt by armed conflict, natural disasters and other human tragedies. Victims around the world have come to trust the people of the Movement to be there to provide essential humanitarian services.*

*The people of the Movement help anyone in urgent need. No regard is paid to political, racial, religious, or ideological differences. No point of view or person is favoured over another. Neither influence nor pressure will ever alter these facts.*

*Red Cross and Red Crescent members protect life and alleviate suffering through the International Committee of the Red Cross, the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and 148<sup>1</sup> National Societies, each organization having a specific mandate and field of action. Together, these organizations form a lasting and evolving Movement, grounded in humanitarian principles and recognized by international law and custom. This unique network has spanned generations, linking people around the world who share a commitment to prevent and ease suffering, and a readiness to protect human life and dignity—no matter whose, no matter where, no matter when.*

*But the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is more than a philosophy, a treaty, or an historical institution. It is the embodiment of a worldwide belief that human life and dignity are worthy of respect and protection from the ravages of man and nature. It is a belief that is made real every day by the actions of skilled and*

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<sup>1</sup> as per October 1989

*trained people who are motivated by a deep personal desire to help others without regard for their own material gain.*

*Through its constituent organizations, members of the Movement come to the aid of people caught in the violence of armed conflict and other emergencies by providing supplies to sustain life, visiting prisoners of war and other detainees, helping people communicate with loved ones, and reuniting families.*

*Red Cross and Red Crescent members help people to prepare for, recover from and, if possible, prevent the effects of hurricanes, floods, fires, drought, or other disasters that threaten individuals and communities.*

*They help people prevent and handle emergencies through social service programmes and by teaching life-saving and health skills. Where needed and possible, they save millions of lives by providing a reliable supply of blood.*

*And they share resources, so developing such services throughout the whole Movement.*

*The financial support of individuals, corporations and governments make this work possible.*

***The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement:  
Protecting Human Life and Dignity Worldwide.***

## **Target audiences and how to reach them**

The Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement has many different target audiences—defined in terms of what is relevant to them as a group and is most likely to motivate them to action on behalf of the Movement. While the Identity Statement provides a common strategic base for all communications, a single message will not “fit” different groups. Without “tailoring” it is quite inappropriate—to take an extreme example—to send the same leaflet both to potential donors and to rural youth.

The *first-phase audience* in implementing any Information Policy should be members of the Red Cross and Red Crescent—especially members of governing bodies, information officers, front-line staff, delegates and volunteers. The goal is greater personal commitment and the ability to communicate to other audiences what the Movement means.

The *second-phase audiences* comprise broad-based groups, which may be further sub-divided by National Societies as appropriate to their own countries (for example, youth might be a sub-category for volunteers and further segmented into rural or urban youth).

**Media and other Gatekeepers:** By recycling Red Cross and Red Crescent messages through radio, television and newspapers they reach an audience of millions. In this process, it is vital that journalists have confidence in the accuracy of information given by the Movement.

Planned and sustained communications are dependent on the answers to three deceptively simple questions: what do we want to say? (the Message); to whom do we want to say it? (the Target Groups); and how are we going to say it? (the Channels of Communication). The Identity Programme provides answers to the first two questions. While researching the Programme, information staff of the working group also carried out a full study of how the Movement uses its existing channels of communication.

In this area, priorities have not been clearly established in the past. Themes for World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day have been chosen, for example, at short notice—so making proper advance planning difficult. Special events have not been integrated into an overall communications plan. Initiatives for films, posters and other promotional material have been launched without overall coordination. In the field of information development assistance, some National Societies have been well cared for while others have been practically ignored.

As communications become more global, this lack of coordination has led to a duplication of effort, expenditure and messages, making it difficult if not impossible to develop the harmonization and “solidarity of image” which the Council of Delegates endorsed.

## **Implementation of the Information Policy**

The ICRC and the League, in association with National Societies, therefore put forward a practical programme for implementation of the Information Policy over the period 1990-1992, which mainly covers the following areas:

The *World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day*, birthday of Henry Dunant (8 May), is currently celebrated by a large majority of National Societies, many of whom organize major events and have access to radio and television. Promotional work on this day has suffered from themes being chosen late and often on an ad hoc basis, without proper regard for their global suitability or attractiveness to donors and mass media.

The Council of Delegates therefore agreed that in future World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day themes should be determined on a three-year cycle as part of a sustained Information Policy. The following themes for 1990-92 were selected:

- 1990 "For Human Life and Dignity" (positioning the Movement in terms of the Information Policy)
- 1991 "Victims of War" (the first global campaign of its kind)
- 1992 "Preventing Disaster" (the second global campaign as the Movement's contribution to the United Nations Decade for Disaster Reduction).

From 1991 onwards, each World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day should involve the promotion of a specific message, consistent with the Information Policy, and wherever possible a fund-raising element.

A record should be kept each year listing governmental and other contributions to each theme (in 1991, for example, for victims of war and in 1992, for the prevention of disasters).

The *Campaign for the Protection of War Victims*, an integral part of the Information Policy, has planned a series of events for 1990-91, including a global painting competition for children, field visits and national tours by Campaign Ambassadors, worldwide television coverage, and special events at national level on World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day. The key element throughout is public awareness and action on behalf of war victims.

The decision by the Council of Delegates to approve an International Red Cross and Red Crescent pavilion and programme at the *Universal Exhibition in Seville in 1992* is also an integral part of the Information Policy.

The world is undergoing a revolution in communications, the speed and scope of which have led to a serious imbalance in information resources between "developed" and "developing" National Societies. While some Societies have invested heavily in the new technology and in experienced personnel, others are regularly faced with shortages of paper, ink and skilled staff (see p. 249, article entitled "Support for information services in developing National Societies", by Helena Korhonen). If the Information Policy is to succeed worldwide, more resources need to be devoted to training and providing facilities to developing Societies. The League and ICRC, in association with participating National Societies, will draw up a list of communications projects requiring assistance in this area.

In the field of *coproductions*, co-operation between National Societies and the Geneva institutions in producing print and audio-visual material should be further encouraged, both on cost grounds and as a means of reinforcing cross-cultural solidarity.

The "*Red Cross, Red Crescent*" Magazine, now circulating in English, French and Spanish editions in over 150 countries and distributed to National Societies, the international media and decision-makers worldwide, is the only channel of communication whose aim is to promote all parts of the Movement. However, its present human and financial resources have been reduced to a dangerous minimum which does not allow proper development. Solutions are being sought to overcome these difficulties with a view to eventually increasing distribution and meeting numerous requests.

Implementing the Information Policy cannot be a matter for the ICRC and the League alone. It needs the active participation and encouragement of National Societies, especially in the fields of advance planning, fund-raising through international television, monitoring and evaluation.

In accordance with the Council of Delegates Resolution, the ICRC and the League have therefore established a *Group of information and fund-raising experts* recruited within the Movement, who will meet once or twice a year with full-time Geneva staff to review the implementation of the policy.

## Looking at the immediate future

A start on the process of establishing a global Red Cross and Red Crescent identity has now been made with the Information Policy. And more than that: a number of steps have been taken to put it into tangible effect, as evidence of its generally accepted usefulness.

In our view and in the view of all those who have officially endorsed the basic messages carried within the Information Policy, it would indeed serve no purpose to leave it as it stands, without transforming words into action.

Right now, action means providing the necessary tools for all potential users to fully understand the practical implications of the Information Policy. It was therefore felt essential to devise, within a matter of months, a guide which would enable not only communicators but also the senior executive staff of all the components of the Movement to familiarize themselves with the various programmes embodied in the Policy.



Although quite clear in its meaning, the Identity Programme is at times somewhat hard to absorb for all those who have not been directly involved in its creative process. Today, it is therefore our primary duty to go beyond the specialist stage and show the actual users that the Identity Programme is not just another official document, but really what it is intended to be: a programme of action.

On the receiving end, everyone will have to decide on plans and systems to implement it. Then resources of all kinds will be identified and the scope of possible action defined, depending on individual financial strength and availability of manpower. In this way the Identity Programme will become part and parcel of the daily life of a society—or institution, or delegation.

The communicator's guide stresses how important it is for the messages carried by the Movement's Identity Statement to become a natural feature of dialogue in all areas of activity, be they relief, medical or preparedness programmes.

In order to improve public perception of the Movement, the Information Policy—and its Identity Statement—recalls the increased responsibility of Red Cross and Red Crescent people, in the National Societies, at the ICRC or the League, to present themselves in such a way as to enhance the Movement's image. It also recognizes the necessity for each organization to abide by its specific mandate and identify itself as a separate body whenever circumstances require. This will but give greater credibility to the whole process, since the work of the Movement is founded, at all times, on internationally recognized humanitarian principles, as well as on international law and customs.

Obviously, there can be no contradiction between the two approaches, i.e. the integrated approach and that of independent action. On the contrary, in taking humanitarian action there is in all circumstances one purpose only, namely to create the necessary conditions needed to reach the victims and alleviate their suffering. The course adopted will always be determined by this priority, as will application of the Information Policy in the field.

Henry Dunant, the first Red Cross communicator ever, would certainly have had no objection to this.

Another major step was taken by the ICRC and the League in April 1990, when both institutions decided to pool their rather meagre resources so as to improve their capacity to cope with the numerous and time-consuming tasks set by the Information Policy, particularly the World Campaign for the Protection of War Victims, the Red Cross/Red Crescent Pavilion in Seville and the World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day.

Implementation of those programmes will take the 11-member team through to the end of 1992, when there will be an evaluation of the information activities actually carried out. Let us hope that the chosen approach will then prove to have been the right one, as it undoubtedly will with the help of all those concerned in the Movement. Solidarity of image is deeply rooted in solidarity of thought and action: it therefore depends upon all of us, the people of the Movement. We shall be responsible for its failure or its success.

**Michèle Mercier**  
**George Reid**

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**Michèle Mercier** was appointed head of the Communication Department in June 1990. After joining the ICRC in 1969, she reported on its activities in a number of countries. Between 1973 and 1978 she was responsible for the Red Cross Broadcasting Service (RCBS) and relations with radio and television. Deputy head of the Press Division until 1982, then head of the Division from 1982 to 1987, she was appointed deputy head of the Communication Department in 1987 and acting head in 1989.

**George Reid** has been co-director of the International Promotion Bureau since May 1990. He was previously director of Public Affairs of the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. After university in Scotland and the United States, he worked for 20 years worldwide as a journalist for British newspapers, ITV and BBC radio and television. From 1974 to 1979 he was a Member of the British Parliament and a Member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

– III –

**COMMUNICATION AND NATIONAL  
RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT  
SOCIETY ACTIVITIES**

***1. COMMUNICATION AND DISSEMINATION***

**Communication to promote dissemination**

**The Philippine National Red Cross**

**by Edilberto H. Angco**

Information and dissemination are integral parts of the present structural design of the Public Relations and Publications Department of the Philippine National Red Cross (PNRC). Although interrelated, the two activities have distinct functions and objectives that set them apart from each other. A system of this kind seems ideal for any National Society which, like the PNRC, is small in size and has meagre human and financial resources. Owing to budgetary constraints at the PNRC, the Head of the Public Relations and Publications Department has to run the “whole show”, except for the field of dissemination where another key person is in charge.

**Information programmes and services**

In general information programmes and services are centralized at National Headquarters. For instance, any nationwide information plan or proposal has first to be approved by the Public Relations Committee whose members are on the PNRC’s Board of Governors, before it is implemented through the network of 83 chapters. In the chapters the tasks related to information and dissemination usually fall to the chapter administrators, all of whom have been trained in these specialized fields of endeavour. More often than not, they are assisted by equally proficient chapter service representatives and college students who are also Red Cross Youth members.

Large-scale information or promotion programmes are implemented through the chapters and then methodically interwoven into national or international Red Cross events such as the anniversary of the National Society, World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day, Red Cross Flag Week, Blood Donors' Week, Summer Safety, Annual Fund Drive, etc. All these events need public support, and require a sustained media barrage for a certain period. The printed press, television and radio must be used in order to put over key messages. In other cases, a direct communication strategy (public events such as seminars, symposia, conventions and training courses that provide a fertile ground for both information and dissemination) is more suitable. Here, effective use can be made of several different methods, such as slide and film showings and pictorial and graphic exhibitions, all of which lend clarity to the messages we want to impart.

When dealing with the media, possibilities abound. For the printed press, news, photos, features and occasionally sponsored supplements come in handy and, for radio and television, not only news but drama series, live and taped interviews, spots, and even Red Cross songs and dances to put over a more lively image. But these should all fit into a well-planned and cost-effective publicity strategy.

Apart from traditional events, the chapters always have considerable freedom of action to inform the local public about their day-to-day activities, in whatever way is most easily accessible and economical for them, without relying on the expertise of National Headquarters. After all, they are in a better position to cultivate and maintain good media relations, among other things, in their respective localities.

There is obviously a variety of other tried and tested methods that the PNRC has regularly used because of their proven results. Artistically designed posters and inexpensive leaflets, newsletters and other publications meant to reach out to a diversity of audiences still have a strong appeal.

## **Promoting dissemination through information**

In recent years the PNRC has been making considerable use of a core group of media practitioners set up on the national level to intensify its year-round information campaign. The group is known as the "Red Cross Media Volunteer Corps". Its members have been well briefed about the Red Cross in its national and international dimensions, so that they are in a position to talk and write about it with a degree of authority.

The group is called to a meeting at the PNRC National Headquarters at least bimonthly to discuss "what's new" on the national and international (Red Cross) scene. With their increasing knowledge of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, these media men can be counted upon to write a good piece about the Red Cross and, whenever necessary, to highlight the principles of the Movement and some aspects of international humanitarian law.

In times of major disaster, whether natural or man-made, these media volunteers provide on-the-spot reports. Of course, the features they write give a glowing account of the Red Cross in action. The latest occasion on record was the December rebellion of 1989, when the PNRC was much in the news because of its highly visible efforts to protect and save the lives of wounded combatants on both sides and civilians who fell victim to the fighting. Their reports, published in newspapers and magazines, discussed the use of the red cross emblem, the Fundamental Principles and some rules for behaviour in combat. The same was true on radio and television. As a result, there was a marked increase in public understanding of and respect and financial support for the PNRC.

Being new and experimental, at this stage the media volunteer corps is still considered as a pilot project. However, prospects look bright for its continuing success. When the time comes, it will gradually be expanded to the chapter level, inasmuch as there are community-based journalists willing to join the Red Cross as volunteer drum-beaters and disseminators.

Occasionally, local journalists can be induced to research and produce a more thorough analysis of the workings of the Movement, focusing on a well-defined theme. The motivating factor is an essay-writing contest with attractive prizes to be won. All the winning entries are then published in book form, for posterity and also for purposes of dissemination, mainly through school libraries.

The PNRC's Public Relations and Publications Department takes the initiative in issuing news items to the press that highlight the Movement's principles and demonstrate the importance of IHL as a contribution to peace.

Speeches and messages by PNRC officials, more specifically for non-Red Cross audiences, are usually packed with information intended to build up the image of the Red Cross as a service organization that protects human life and dignity.

As a general rule, all training programmes are preceded by a basic dissemination course on the Movement (its history, the various components and their activities), the principles and IHL. The training given

is in first aid, nursing, primary health care and youth leadership, and technical training for new staff and volunteers. Major relief operations and blood donation campaigns also provide ideal opportunities for information and dissemination.

Whenever possible, stories about Red Cross activities intended for the media are written in such a way that they relate to the Fundamental Principles and IHL. This “soft sell” approach, which is certainly effective, simply calls for imagination and creativity on the part of the information officer.

To reach a wide and diverse audience, the PNRC’s best means of communication is the radio. Radio stations are strategically located in practically all regions of the country, and are owned and operated by both public and private companies. The good thing about them, especially those in the countryside, is that they welcome any item about the Red Cross. To make maximum use of these facilities, the PNRC has been encouraging its chapters to produce weekly radio programmes. This is a long-term goal but we are confident that it is achievable.

**Edilberto H. Angco**

**Edilberto H. Angco** is Head of Public Relations and Publications at the Philippine National Red Cross. He has held that position for the past 15 years. In 1962 he graduated in Fine Arts from the University of Santo Tomas in Manila, Philippines, and later followed courses in philosophy and public relations. Recently he served as a member of the International Communications Group that formulated the Information Policy of the Movement.

# Practical aspects of information and dissemination

Moroccan Red Crescent

by Ben Saoud Badreddine

What is the true impact of Red Cross and Red Crescent information in the world today?

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement's information policy, long a source of controversy, is considered by some to be insufficiently developed and in need of greater attention.

Since its foundation over 125 years ago, the Movement has constantly had to adapt its image to the changing times. This is no easy task for those in charge of shaping its multifaceted image and devising ways to alleviate human suffering, a source of perpetual violence.

The Red Cross and Red Crescent message sometimes fails to reach the people for whom it is intended. This is a problem both for us and for them,<sup>1</sup> since the Movement therefore does not always obtain the support it needs from those who care about victims and those who are striving to safeguard human values that have been trampled underfoot.

Henry Dunant, the founder of the Red Cross, described human suffering in terms so compelling as to convince peoples and governments of the usefulness of adopting legal instruments to protect conflict victims, an idea that was inconceivable prior to 1863.<sup>2</sup> Arguing the need to alleviate the suffering of wounded and sick soldiers and protect human dignity in situations of distress, he galvanized public opinion in support of his humanitarian ideas and inspired many of the leaders of his day to act accordingly. It behoves all those who follow in the footsteps of such a man to ask themselves whether

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<sup>1</sup> See *Seminar on information and dissemination of international humanitarian law as a contribution to peace (Leningrad, 10-14 October 1988)*, a document presented by the Commission on the Red Cross, Red Crescent and Peace to the Council of Delegates (Geneva, 26-27 October 1989) (CD/6/1a).

<sup>2</sup> Dunant, Henry, *A Memory of Solferino*, ICRC, Geneva, 1986.

they are doing all they can to ensure respect for the protective emblem and save all victims indiscriminately.

This question has been a constant concern of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement<sup>3</sup> for over a century as, guided by its principles, it has set its own course enabling it more or less to uphold its basic values, despite the many difficulties it has had to face.

Today, however, deeper self-probing is necessary if we are to avoid lagging behind in a world that has been taken over by cables and satellites bringing information designed for mass appeal and rapid consumption.

Should the Movement settle for its current information practices or should it—and is it ready to—take up the challenge of adapting its needs to the means of communication offered by modern technology?

Continuing unequal access by its members to the abundant and varied opportunities provided by the mass media threatens, we believe, to deprive the Movement of a chance to develop a hitherto untapped potential that would enable it to project a truer and clearer image of itself throughout the world. This is a solid argument in favour of turning to professional communicators.

Red Cross and Red Crescent information and communication experts are well aware of this and eager to ensure that the Movement finds its due place in the media world. They are seeking to do so by rallying the media to the Red Cross and Red Crescent cause and winning their active support for the inviolability of humanitarian values, whose respect will guarantee greater understanding among all peoples. The ultimate objective is to safeguard world peace.

We consider that the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is best placed among non-governmental organizations to take the lead in this respect, but to do so it must be able to rely on its own resources and the enthusiasm of its members.

The 149 Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, which together represent every value system in the world, constitute a powerful force for the advancement of human welfare. Each Society has a responsibility to assume on behalf of the Movement, for helping to protect human beings everywhere and to promote world peace. But they cannot do so unless their structures conform to the norms and priorities of development and, in particular, include an information and public relations service.

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<sup>3</sup> See *Information Policy of the Movement*, a document presented by the ICRC and the League to the Council of Delegates (Rio de Janeiro, November 1987) (CD/8/2). *Ibid*, presented to the Council of Delegates (Geneva, October 1989) (CD/7/1).



## Promoting the humanitarian ideal through the media

Morocco, an African, Muslim and Mediterranean country, adopted the modern institutions to which its people aspired on attaining independence in 1956.

One of the country's greatest humanitarian and social achievements was the creation of the Moroccan Red Crescent Society by the late King Mohammed V.<sup>4</sup> This was an event of national importance enabling Morocco to reassert its sovereignty in an area that had totally escaped its control under the protectorate.<sup>5</sup> The emergence of the National Society filled a need that had been sorely felt prior to independence.

From its inception, the Moroccan Red Crescent attracted considerable media attention. It thus quickly realized the importance of communication for an institution whose humanitarian activities require constant public support and whose field work owes its success not only to the tireless devotion of its leaders but also to the unstinting efforts of its volunteers.

The interest of the media, which are prominent among the country's democratic institutions in maintaining pluralism under the auspices of the constitutional monarchy, rapidly focused on the Society's work.<sup>6</sup> This stimulated it to prepare for its information role and use all available means to develop its activities, propagate humanitarian ideals and provide continuous assistance to those in need.

## The Moroccan Red Crescent Information Service

The Moroccan Red Crescent, which enjoys widespread popularity at home, is given broad coverage by the national media, which understand that it represents a key link in a worldwide humanitarian chain. This media recognition has bolstered respect and support for the National Society.

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<sup>4</sup> Royal Decree (*Dhahir*) whereby the Moroccan Red Crescent was created on 24 December 1957. The National Society was recognized by the ICRC on 7 August 1958 and admitted to the League on 25 September 1958.

<sup>5</sup> Under the protectorate the country was divided between the French Red Cross and the Spanish Red Cross.

<sup>6</sup> The major disasters suffered by Morocco since 1959 have been the paralysis epidemic caused by the consumption of adulterated oil (1959-1961), the 1960 Agadir earthquake and flooding during the 1960s.

- **Organization**

The Information Service is part of the Division of External Relations, Information and Dissemination, whose main tasks are to handle all information questions, maintain relations with the media, apply the guidelines established by the supervisory bodies concerning information on the National Society's activities, exchange information with sister Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, contribute efficiently to developing information policies in co-operation with the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and, in brief, help shape the Movement's image inside the country.

The Information Service, created at the same time as the National Society, has a photo laboratory and audio-visual facilities.

- ***Moroccan Red Crescent Review***

The *Moroccan Red Crescent Review* was launched in 1969. Prior to that date the National Society published only a liaison bulletin, but the rapid expansion of its activities created the need for an equally widespread means of communication.

The *Moroccan Red Crescent Review*, currently published quarterly in Arabic, has a circulation of 3,000 copies. It specializes in humanitarian issues and carries news of the activities of the National Society, the League, the ICRC, the Henry Dunant Institute and sister Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies which exchange publications with the Moroccan National Society.

This twofold national and international focus is necessary in a country that is used to broad news coverage. The publication's director is an eminent Moroccan information specialist of national and international repute.<sup>7</sup>

The *Moroccan Red Crescent Review*, financed through subscriptions and advertising, is an excellent and independent source of national and international news and information about humanitarian issues. Its large readership includes people from all walks of life, who represent a wide range of opinions.

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<sup>7</sup> Mr. Mehdi Bennouna, director of the *Moroccan Red Crescent Review* and founder and director of *Agence Maghreb Presse (MAP)* from 1957 to 1974. He has also been the director of several Arabic and French-language newspapers and periodicals.

Such publications are becoming increasingly rare among the National Societies of developing countries. This is particularly true in North Africa and the Middle East, where some of those launched in the past have been short-lived.<sup>8</sup> However, each National Society in this region could and hopefully soon will publish its own periodical.

The information services of the ICRC and the League contribute to the *Moroccan Red Crescent Review* by providing material for its international news section.

Why is there such an interest in news of the Movement? The answer lies in the principles of unity and universality that bind all members of the great Red Cross and Red Crescent family. These principles create a sense of solidarity among all the National Societies, each of which is an invaluable source of information about its own country. The exchange of information also enables volunteers to expand their knowledge of Red Cross and Red Crescent activities and draw inspiration from the day-to-day work of others. The Red Cross and Red Crescent image is thereby strengthened and spread beyond national borders.

The support of the national media is just as important to the information work of the National Societies as international co-operation.

The *Moroccan Red Crescent Review* has, in addition to its editorial staff, a network of correspondents at the provincial and prefectural levels. Selected among the National Society's volunteers, especially the young ones, they are responsible for keeping abreast of and informing the editors of the *Review* about the National Society's activities. Some of these correspondents are professional journalists working for other periodicals, a fact that further heightens the interest and credibility of their reports and makes Red Cross and Red Crescent information everyone's concern.

## Radio and television service

The Moroccan Red Crescent has its own radio and television service, which maintains relations with the country's media. The National Society is viewed as a reliable partner by the latter, which have given it considerable support and provided responsible coverage of its news and activities throughout its 33 years in existence.

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<sup>8</sup> The *Reviews* of the Algerian Red Crescent, the Tunisian Red Crescent, the Egyptian Red Crescent and the Secretariat of the Arab National Societies in Jeddah.

The role played by the Moroccan Red Crescent, known as a staunch defender of humanitarian principles, in major events within the country is highlighted by radio and television. National and local radio and television networks broadcast news about large-scale humanitarian operations and social welfare campaigns. They also frequently produce special and highly useful programmes on specific Red Cross and Red Crescent events.

While relief associations are naturally primarily concerned with assistance in the event of natural disaster and conflict, other major events affecting society may have a considerable impact on their work in peacetime. Two such events are considered as milestones in the history of the Moroccan Red Crescent.

The first event was of an historical nature. It took place in 1987, when 350,000 men and women rallied together from all over the kingdom to take part in the "Green March" launched by H.M. King Hassan II,<sup>9</sup> during which the National Society provided humanitarian assistance by organizing relief workers, volunteers, doctors and nurses to take care of the marchers. The quality of this assistance and the humanitarian gesture made by H.R.H. Princess Lalla Malika, President of the Moroccan Red Crescent, in providing it were underscored by the media and helped strengthen popular support for the National Society by demonstrating its efficiency and reliability.

The second event was the signing in 1979 of an agreement for co-operation between the Moroccan Red Crescent and the Spanish Red Cross,<sup>10</sup> stipulating that the two National Societies would jointly provide medical and social assistance to Moroccan workers residing in Europe who return to their country every summer by way of Spain and the Straits of Gibraltar. This seasonal migration, which occurs annually in June, July and August, makes headlines and is widely commented on in news bulletins and editorials. During this period, the Moroccan and Spanish National Societies are the focus of national and international media attention, which in turn has an impact on the entire Red Cross and Red Crescent family.

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<sup>9</sup> This peace march decreed by King Hassan II was to mark the end of Spanish colonization in the Western Sahara and symbolize Morocco's recovery of its territorial integrity (*Editor's note*: the ICRC declines all responsibility for this comment, which is entirely the author's). See also *Hassan II présente la Marche verte*, Plon, Paris, 1989.

<sup>10</sup> Co-operation agreement signed by H.R.H. Princess Lalla Malika, President of the Moroccan Red Crescent, and the late Mr. Enrique de la Mata, President of the Spanish Red Cross (July 1979).

Although the media are particularly attracted by this type of event, they are nevertheless also interested in more traditional programmes dealing with prevention and the dissemination of the Movement's principles and ideals.

- ***World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day (8 May)***

Each year World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day also attracts the national media and provides an opportunity to centre attention on troubled areas of the world where the ICRC and the League are active either in carrying out relief operations for the victims of natural disaster or conflict, or in denouncing violations of international humanitarian law (IHL).<sup>11</sup>

- ***Audio-visual means***

The Moroccan Red Crescent has various audio-visual aids to organize information campaigns for both its members and the public at large. These include video equipment, television sets, film and slide projectors and a collection of videotapes, all of which are frequently used in training courses, seminars and for other purposes.

The provincial and prefectural Committees turn to professional filmmakers for the production of videotapes about their activities, which are used in fund-raising drives and information campaigns.

This brings us to the relationship between dissemination and information and the impact that information has had on the National Society's dissemination programmes over the past four years.

## **Relationship between dissemination and information**

From 1987 to 1989 the Moroccan Red Crescent organized a series of courses and seminars on IHL and human rights, as part of an effort to implement the Action Programme of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement with respect to the dissemination of international humanitarian law and the principles and ideals of the

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<sup>11</sup> In conformity with the 1949 Geneva Conventions and their 1977 Additional Protocols.

Movement.<sup>12</sup> It was a very enlightening experience for the National Society, not only in the information area but also in other fields of activity.

The approximately 500 participants were officials from different ministries, members of the Royal Armed Forces, youth leaders and professional journalists. The ten courses and seminars covered every major aspect of IHL and human rights.<sup>13</sup>

The parallel study of these two disciplines is important both for the acquisition of knowledge and for pedagogical reasons, since a heterogeneous public<sup>14</sup> can hardly be expected to be interested in only those humanitarian problems that are directly linked with conventional armed conflict. In this connection, a Red Cross delegate at the Leningrad seminar<sup>15</sup> commented that in her country, which had long been at peace, the National Society could arouse public interest only if it dealt with the highly topical subject of human rights. This Red Cross Society, which is working actively towards peace, has learned that it must adapt its activities to the situation in its own country.

The Moroccan Red Crescent also has understood that it must deal in a comprehensive manner with the subject of human protection. This approach, which has facilitated the dissemination of its humanitarian message through the media, is reflected in the following titles of articles that have appeared in the national press: "Series of seminars on international humanitarian law and human rights",<sup>16</sup> "Committed to the preservation of human dignity",<sup>17</sup> "Medical personnel assured of special protection in the event of armed conflict",<sup>18</sup> "Humanity before military necessity".<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Action Programmes of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement with respect to the dissemination of international humanitarian law and the principles and ideals of the Movement (1982-1985 and 1986-1990).

<sup>13</sup> Programme financed jointly by AMIDEAST and the Moroccan Red Crescent, with League and ICRC participation.

<sup>14</sup> See Gillioz, François, "Seven courses, seven audiences", in *Dissemination*, No. 10, September 1988, p. 10.

<sup>15</sup> See note 1.

<sup>16</sup> Interview with Professor El Kadiri of the Faculty of Law of the University of Rabat, co-ordinator of the series of seminars, published in the newspaper *Rissalat Al Umma* (in Arabic) of 12 December 1987 (No. 1456).

<sup>17</sup> Interview with Mr. Ainina Ould Abjejalil, Secretary General of the Mauritanian Red Crescent, published in the French-language newspaper *L'Opinion* of 7 December 1987 (No. 8158).

<sup>18</sup> Interview with Mr. Maurice Torrelli, of the Institute for Peace and Development in Nice, published in *L'Opinion* of 16 December 1987 (No. 8161 - "La Protection du médecin dans les conflits armés").

<sup>19</sup> *L'Opinion*, 15 December 1987.

One article about the dissemination of humanitarian law, especially among members of the armed forces, asks the following question: "Does (information) reach the soldier or does it remain at the decision-making level?". It goes on as follows: "Professor El Kadiri, the moderator of the meeting, said that the humanitarian National Societies were very active in spreading knowledge of humanitarian law in their own countries and the Moroccan Red Crescent was among those that had done the most in that respect".<sup>20</sup>

Other articles on the subject include the following: "The thirtieth anniversary of the Moroccan Red Crescent marked by seminars on humanitarian law and human rights",<sup>21</sup> "Knowledge of human rights can alleviate human suffering",<sup>22</sup> "The press and international humanitarian law",<sup>23</sup> "Rendering wars less inhuman",<sup>24</sup> "The status of journalists in armed conflict",<sup>25</sup> "The League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies welcomes the Moroccan Red Crescent's initiative to promote the dissemination of international humanitarian law",<sup>26</sup> "Measures to protect journalists during dangerous assignments"<sup>27</sup> and "Resistance and humanitarian law".<sup>28</sup>

These titles reflect the main themes taken up by the press in connection with the courses and seminars on IHL and human rights. The press showed a keen understanding of the importance of the subject and, by giving extensive coverage, stimulated debate on a much wider scale. This shows the importance of media support if dissemination is to benefit victims and draw attention to the breaches of humanitarian law, which are too often ignored.

The courses and seminars have thus enabled the press to explore an area hitherto veiled by lack of information and thereby rekindle interest in humanitarian issues that appeared to have been cast aside for partisan politics.

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<sup>20</sup> *L'Opinion*, 14 December 1987.

<sup>21</sup> *Le Matin du Sahara*, 14 December 1987.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*, 6 December 1987.

<sup>23</sup> *Al Anbaa* (in Arabic), 10 December 1987.

<sup>24</sup> *L'Opinion*, 6 December 1987.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid*, 8 December 1987.

<sup>26</sup> *Le Journal de Tanger*, 2 December 1988.

<sup>27</sup> *Al-Alam* (in Arabic), 13 December 1987.

<sup>28</sup> Mohammed Ma'azouzi, Moulay Hachem El Alaoui, "Résistance marocaine armée (1900-1935)", *L'Opinion*, 16 February 1988.

It should be acknowledged, however, that the Movement has not always been enterprising and transparent in its relations with the media. This can be explained by the fact that it had no plan of action combining dissemination and information, nor goals and methods conducive to promoting a better understanding of its ideals and activities on the threshold of the twenty-first century.

## **New perspectives and redefinition of identity**

The Council of Delegates conferred a mandate on the League and the ICRC to create an information policy for the Movement because an urgent need was felt to correct an unsatisfactory situation due not to any failure to carry out existing information programmes, but rather to the increasing speed of world events and the ensuing risk that the Movement's image might be obscured or distorted.

In other words, adaptation was seen as necessary to survival in a highly competitive world ruled by technological change.

The creation of an International Communications Group by the Council of Delegates in 1987<sup>29</sup> was a step in this direction. The Moroccan Red Crescent, a National Society that represents a unique value system and a vast geographic region, is directly concerned with information problems. As we have seen, the current practices in this area are somewhat deficient owing not only to the lack of a uniform policy or even of adequate means, but also to external influences inherent in each country's system.

We also know that information and dissemination activities are still neglected by a number of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, as compared with their other activities. This does not mean that the leaders of these Societies are unaware of this shortcoming, but rather that the Movement itself does not have a keen enough overall perception of its problems.

The Identity Programme of the Movement and the Information Policy established by the first and second Varna Workshops<sup>30</sup> seem to have set in motion a process tending to integrate the Red Cross and Red Crescent information system into the new international information order. This is crucial for the Movement, whose historical heritage places it at the forefront of the struggle against underdevelopment,

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<sup>29</sup> Council of Delegates (Rio de Janeiro, November 1987, Resolution 8, "Information Policy of the Movement").

<sup>30</sup> Meetings of heads of information departments, 1987 and 1988.



poverty and violence and for disarmament and greater understanding between peoples of every cultural background. To defend humanity is everyone's task or, as Henry Dunant said: "The cause for which we labour must be international, for it is universal. It is the cause of every man on behalf of every other: it must be the concern of all human beings".<sup>31</sup>

Let us therefore restructure the Red Cross and Red Crescent information system and redefine its role in such a way as to enable the National Societies to use it more correctly and efficiently wherever it stands to serve those who need our protection. Not until this has been achieved will we be able to say that Red Cross and Red Crescent information not only exists, but has a true impact on the welfare of humanity.

### **Ben Saoud Badreddine**

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**Ben Saoud Badreddine** was born on 20 August 1948 in Rabat and holds a law degree. He is head of the Moroccan Red Crescent's Division of External Relations, Information and Dissemination and editor of the *Moroccan Red Crescent Review*. He is also a member of the International Communications Group (ICG) and the Public Support Group, set up respectively in 1987 and 1990.

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<sup>31</sup> *Information Policy of the Movement*, a document presented by the ICRC and the League to the Council of Delegates (Geneva, October 1989) (CD/7/1).

## ***2. COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY SERVICES***

# **Communication to promote community services**

**Malawi Red Cross Society**

**by Grace Paliani**

### **Introduction**

The topic “Communication to promote community services” sounds simple, but it is vital because it points to the contribution that any health-oriented institution should make towards the general success of its undertakings.

On closer examination it will be seen that one basic communication task, which, however, involves a number of sub-tasks all geared towards achieving the same objectives, is the promotion of community services through publicity.

The main function of information in Malawi (to be specific) is to keep the public—in towns, cities and rural areas—well informed about the aims and activities of the Malawi Red Cross Society. These activities include primary health care, blood donor recruitment and disaster relief. Another important aspect of promotion is that the public should have an adequate and favourable image or impression of the Society; it is therefore of critical importance that they should be encouraged to follow it as something that belongs to them and is part of the Malawi community.

How does the Society go about trying to attain its objectives in communication to promote community services?

The Society does so by the following means: regular press releases concerning all relevant activities of the Red Cross are issued to the printed media and the radio to familiarize the public with the activities run by the Society for the community. In this way, as soon as possible after Red Cross volunteers have been involved in any community service, the Malawi public is made aware of what the Movement is doing to alleviate human suffering wherever it may occur.

The National Society on its own does not have the necessary information resources to reach the public (there is only one person in the section). But by maintaining close working contacts with the news media, the Information Section has been able to reach practically everybody in the country.

Feedback from the public is essential. To this end, in Malawi we have trained volunteers as liaison information officers, whose duties include writing about Red Cross activities in their areas and sending these news items to headquarters for further publication via the media. In this way a healthy sense of competition has been developed among the divisions so that ordinary people in different areas become self-motivated to promote Red Cross activities and those of the community.

Apart from the news media, the Society also publishes its own magazine, which contains more detailed news items about events pertaining to the Red Cross. This publication, which is also a major channel of communication in the promotion of community services, is published quarterly and there are plans to introduce a newsletter to publicize community activities to a much wider audience.

The Society has also used the radio as a means of promoting community services. Everything that Red Cross volunteers have done in their respective areas is aired during our weekly programmes and this gives an overview of the Society's activities in the field.

To promote further our services to the community, the Red Cross in Malawi has conducted country-wide dissemination campaigns in schools and among the armed forces. At all these places, films depicting the work of the Red Cross in Malawi and overseas have been shown to the public. Volunteers are also featured in the films.

Press gatherings have also been organized to brief newsmen on our current activities to bring assistance to the needy.

If the Information Section is to reach a point of relative self-sustained growth, then it has to play a very important role indeed.

## **Other modes of communication**

Communication to promote community services can be carried out by Red Cross volunteers in their respective areas both orally and by practical demonstration.

The Malawi Red Cross has trained 850 volunteers in simple skills, which they pass on to other volunteers and families, as well as other people in the various communities concerned in any way with the improvement of health.

This programme is called the Malawi Red Cross primary health care programme and is run in conjunction with the Ministry of Health. The Danish Red Cross is the sole donor for the programme.

The Society relies on these volunteers to assist in the promotion of community services by their teaching and actions—a word of praise to the volunteers means a hundred of words of praise to the Society. The primary health care volunteers work three days a week and their workload includes health education, immunization and welfare activities. They work without any remuneration, and their voluntary spirit means a lot to the community.

### **Communication by displaying the emblem**

Volunteers are involved not only in primary health care activities, but also in the construction of boreholes (protected wells), springs and offices. They also care for the aged and orphans. For every building erected by them, a Red Cross emblem is put up, thus conveying the message to the community. Red Cross volunteers wearing tabards bearing the emblem are always seen where refugees from Mozambique are sheltered.

Malawi Red Cross staff and volunteers help to distribute food and non-food items to the Mozambican refugees. There are 130 distribution centres. A lot of appeals have been made for this programme and a number of publicity campaigns have also been launched by the media, helping to promote community services. The relief section also cares for victims of natural disasters such as floods and carries out tracing work for refugees and missing people.

### **Blood donor recruitment programme**

The Malawi Red Cross Society runs a blood donor recruitment programme whose main aim is to recruit and retain sufficient numbers of voluntary blood donors. Talks and lectures are given in schools, colleges and private organizations to attract such donors. This is being done mostly in Blantyre, the Society's pilot area for the voluntary blood donor recruitment programme. Media coverage of such events also serves to educate the public and promote donor recruitment.

Continuing co-operation by the public and support by voluntary blood donors are vital for the successful operation of the Red Cross voluntary blood donor recruitment programme. Communication is also an essential feature of it.

## **Malawi Red Cross divisions**

Since 1989, the Malawi Red Cross divisions (branches) have changed their approach from routine traditional first-aid activities to development activities. Most activities help to make the divisions known to the public. To be actively recognized the divisions have set up self-help projects such as the following: Mzimba Red Cross Division has a fully operational tailoring project with an income of K1,500 a month; Nkhata Bay Red Cross Division has also launched a tailoring project; Rumphu Red Cross Division has a maize mill, generating K1,200 a month, assisting the drought-affected areas where the Red Cross is distributing maize to supplement the staple food cassava; and Machinga Division will very soon have four water wells for communities with water problems.

## **Youth**

The Youth Section of the Society in Malawi does a lot to promote community services in Malawi. They help in first-aid activities. Young people in Malawi have also assisted in promoting international relationships, e.g. with young people in Denmark and Bavaria, West Germany.

From 19 February to 30 March 1990 the Information and Fund-raising Officer, accompanied by the Youth Officer, toured 30 secondary schools and colleges throughout Malawi, and met 120,000 students, who were given talks on the work of the Red Cross worldwide. During the talks much emphasis was placed on the role of youth in development.

After the tour we discovered the following: young people would like to continue being active after school, to be fully involved in fund-raising activities and to have a say especially in decision-making.

All this helps to establish contact with young people and makes for successful communication.

**Grace Paliani**

<p><b>Grace Paliani</b> is Information Officer at the Malawi Red Cross Society.</p>
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### **3. COMMUNICATION, RECRUITMENT OF MEMBERS AND FUND-RAISING**

## **Communication to raise funds for humanitarian activities**

**The Netherlands Red Cross**

**by Marcel P.L. Vergeer**

Ask any number of Dutchmen out in the street the name of a non-profit organization and 93 out of 100 will spontaneously answer: the Netherlands Red Cross. And when you ask these 93 people for their appreciation of Red Cross activities, 92 of them will say: "Very good!"

I suppose your reaction will be: "That's fantastic! That means the Netherlands Red Cross has to invest hardly any energy in raising funds! The money comes rolling in automatically, so to speak."

Wrong. I have to disappoint you. Year after year the Netherlands Red Cross spends around 3.5 million guilders in order to raise a total of about 90 million guilders; that is, 6% of the annual budget.

I can hear you say: "That is an enormous amount of money. One can finance a lot of activities with such a sum! 'I'm sorry, but you are wrong again. In a country where the cost of one minute of television coverage ranges from 3 to 12 thousand guilders and where you pay 430,000 guilders for a full-page advertisement in the 17 biggest daily newspapers, such an amount is not very large.

Would you like to know more about communications and fund-raising in our small country? And are you eager to know how the Netherlands Red Cross tries to keep its head above the great flood of information that sweeps over our well-constructed dykes? Then read on.

## How to keep one's head above water

The communication scene in our country is often described as a jungle, in which a great variety of message-producers and media are competing for the attention of the population of 14.2 million.

Apart from the commercial world, the Red Cross is one of hundreds of non-profit organizations that are active in the fields of social welfare, services for the disabled and various other groups of patients, general health care, aid to the "third world" and protection of the environment. Even in the area of disaster preparedness Red Cross volunteers have to compete with volunteer fire-brigades, first-aiders and professional rescue teams made up of doctors and nurses. Even our organization's famous holiday ship for the disabled and chronically handicapped, the "Henry Dunant", has been perfectly imitated by the major competitor in the field of social welfare with its vessel "de Zonnebloem", which has considerably decreased our own ship's PR value. Last but not least, our Society has to fight for its position in the field of emergency relief in the event of disaster or war. The biggest competitors in this field are: UNICEF, Foster Parents Plan, *Caritas Neerlandica* and Médecins sans frontières, Holland. Just how competitive the Dutch non-profit market is may be illustrated by the results of a yearly opinion poll conducted among the Dutch public. When people were asked about the organization to which they would prefer to donate funds first of all, the outcome in 1989 was as follows, according to the Chari-barometer Report 1989 by the MEDIAD Bureau for Communications Research, Rotterdam:

1. Netherlands Cancer Prevention Fund
2. Dutch Heart Foundation
3. Greenpeace
4. Netherlands Red Cross
5. World Nature Fund
6. Kidney Foundation Netherlands
7. Asthma Foundation
8. Foster Parents Plan
9. Salvation Army
10. Amnesty International

For the Netherlands Red Cross the message is clear: the public tends increasingly to donate to organizations that take practical action to safeguard health.

The competition between Dutch charities may be exhausting, but the extreme rivalry between the various media in Holland is even more killing.

Indeed, 86% of the country's 4.6 million households are linked to the national cable TV network, the highest cable rate of any country in Western Europe. On every TV set one can choose from more than 25 programmes, only four of which are purely Dutch. The others are transmitted from Germany, the United Kingdom, Belgium, France and the United States.

Then there are the papers: more than 50 national and regional daily newspapers are available (average number of subscriptions per household: 1.2) and more than 600 local commercial newspapers, which are distributed free of charge door to door. Not to mention the estimated 1.5 kg of brochures, folders and direct mailings that are swallowed monthly by every single letterbox.

Last but not least, there is the magazine culture. The average household buys at least two weekly magazines and receives four or five monthlies on top of that. Most of the money that finances these (mostly full-colour) magazines comes from advertisers. Total annual expenditure on advertising for all the media amounts to some 7.2 billion guilders (1988) and is still growing rapidly.

In addition, an astonishing 3.6 billion postal items are distributed for advertising purposes, which represents a total investment of 2.25 billion guilders (figures for 1989).

As you can well understand, it is no easy job for the Netherlands Red Cross to attract the attention of the public. Nevertheless, I can assert that we have developed sound and effective means of ensuring success.

## **Roots in society**

Over its 123 years of existence the Netherlands Red Cross Society has developed into an organization that is very well-rooted in Dutch society. The number of Red Cross members is relatively high: 1,052,300 as at 30 December 1989, out of a total population of 14.2 million.

The number of local branches—483—is also surprisingly large for such a small country. With its 32,000 active volunteers the Netherlands Red Cross runs programmes in the fields of disaster preparedness, social welfare, tracing, blood transfusion and donation and emergency relief abroad.



Sources of funds for our Society are quite diverse and can be divided into the following categories (figures for 1989):

1. **The annual national fund-raising campaign:** 9 million guilders (Dfl).

In the first two weeks of June all local branches, supported by headquarters, appeal to the public to provide the basic funding for our Society. There is frequent radio and TV coverage, mostly on a voluntary basis. More than 1,600,000 people are approached directly by mail. Thousands of public billboards (bought space) all over the country display campaign posters. All local branches join in the campaign through local promotion activities.

2. **Contributions from Red Cross members:** 12 million guilders. Just before Christmas the 1,052 million RC members receive the annual request for their subscription fee by post.

3. **Legacies:** 7.5 million guilders.

This amount shows the popularity of our Society among elderly people. All solicitors and notaries regularly receive a set of brochures especially designed to interest clients who come to draw up wills.

4. **Government grants:** 29 million guilders.

The Netherlands Red Cross received grants from certain governmental bodies for expenses incurred in the implementation of activities that are initiated at the request of the government. Such activities include:

- disaster preparedness: grants for training facilities, transport, clothing and first-aid materials.
- Social welfare: allowances for training and professional support for volunteers.
- Verification of personal data: the archives of our Tracing Agency contain thousands of identity cards from the World War II concentration camps. These are used to support claims of war victims who apply for government benefits.

5. **Fund-raising campaigns for emergency relief operations abroad:** 26 million guilders. In case of major disaster or famine special nationwide campaigns are organized, with the indispensable support of the public media.

6. **Various fund-raising activities:** 7.5 million guilders. The main examples are:

— Appeals mailed direct to some 5,000 selected commercial firms and banks	Dfl. 771,000.—
— Red Cross Golf Tournament with members of the royal family present	Dfl. 62,000.—
— The sale of Red Cross stamps (in 1987 four special Red Cross stamps were offered for sale in all post offices)	Dfl. 3,671,000.—
— R puzzle magazine with about 6,000 subscribers	Dfl. 702,000.—
— RC bingo game	Dfl. 1,269,000.—

In order to raise funds on the national level, our national headquarters (about 300 paid staff) has an Information and Fund-raising Department, headed by Mr. Ben Burgers. This department is divided into three sections: information (7.5 people), fund-raising (10.5 people) and the Audiovisual Centre (2 people). One of the main information activities is the production of a Red Cross magazine (six issues a year; circulation: 32,000 to volunteers plus 22,000 to commercial and press contacts), including a special centrefold section with information intended for the volunteers. Apart from this the department maintains contacts with the press, produces brochures, leaflets and articles, and handles the day-to-day flow of information about Red Cross activities. Now we shall go into the details of some case studies in order to illustrate our information structure, programmes and methods.

## **A successful membership drive**

One of the most stable sources of income for the Netherlands Red Cross is the contribution paid by RC members. One might say that this particular source is much more important than others, because with the donations of their members the local branches are largely able to finance their own local activities. The branches keep 50% of the amount raised, and the other 50% goes to headquarters.

For this reason, the gradual decrease in membership after it peaked in 1980 was a major source of concern for the Governing Board. In 1980 membership totalled 1,071,878; in 1987 it had fallen to 944,752. The decrease was due mainly to the ageing of the existing membership, lack of growth and the fact that every year 2.6% of the members

moved house without informing us of their new addresses. Therefore a nationwide campaign was launched in November and December 1988 to stop the decline and push the number back up over the million mark.

The campaign was prepared with great care. The main problem at the outset was how to finance a special mailing to all households not registered as RC members. Activities connected with the recruitment of members are the exclusive statutory task of the autonomous local branches. Consequently, permission had to be requested formally at the General Assembly in June 1988. On that occasion the representatives of the branches approved a financing proposal that was unique in the history of our Society. According to this proposal, all proceeds from new members recruited during the 1988 campaign would be turned over to national headquarters for one year. Moreover, all local representatives agreed that national headquarters should be allowed to organize a *nationwide* campaign. In my opinion this was a major victory for our Society as a whole.

It was crucial, however, that the branches should also take an active part in the campaign at local level. Therefore a set of special campaign materials was produced and distributed to the local branches at cost price. The figurehead on these materials was Yvonne van Gennip, a young and very popular Dutch ice-skating star, who won three gold medals at the 1987 Calgary Winter Olympic Games.

To promote the campaign nationwide, headquarters approached several TV companies (at that time all Dutch TV companies were still non-profit societies) and spent many hours discussing estimates and campaign ideas. Finally an agreement was reached with the Veronica Broadcasting Company, a relatively new company with great appeal for young people, one of the main target groups.

The campaign reached its climax in the last week of November 1988, when Veronica put out several very popular TV programmes that included items on the RC. The Veronica news service produced a special documentary about the Red Cross, including a film of the League airbridge from Khartoum to southern Sudan made by their own journalist. The TV coverage was supported by half-page advertisements in all major newspapers, financed by commercial sponsors.

The local branches joined in with great enthusiasm and energy. Thousands of volunteers spent countless hours distributing posters to shopkeepers, doing direct marketing by phone, handing out stickers to schoolchildren, organizing RC exhibitions in public places, etc. Regional radio stations broadcast a special recording appealing to listeners to fill in the fund-raising letter and mail it back. The success

of the campaign was unprecedented. The amazing total of 144,000 new members was registered at the end of 1988. Whether and to what extent the earthquake that struck Armenia on 7 December, just a few days after the campaign week ended, and the rapid response of the Netherlands Red Cross to that appalling disaster contributed to the success of the campaign, we shall never know.

## **Joint fund-raising**

Among professional fund-raisers the Dutch public is known as one of the most generous in the world. The total amount of donations to non-profit enterprises in any one year is considerable: in 1988 some 675 million guilders were collected by 245 organizations. And this figure is still growing every year.

As mentioned above, the density of non-profit appeals in all the media is very high. Even under “normal” circumstances it is difficult to struggle through the jungle of messages and come across loud and clear. But in the event of major emergency it is especially hard to reach the general public and raise the enormous amount of money needed for large-scale relief operations. At such times, during a single evening on TV two or three different bank account numbers may be shown as well as the telephone numbers of different and competing organizations, all aiming at the same audience and all canvassing for the same purpose. And it has also happened frequently that the front pages of all the major newspapers have featured three or four advertisements, each with its own account number and all appealing for the same kind of support.

This phenomenon—which is common and accepted practice in countries with a capitalistic economy—was directly attacked by the managers of TV stations in November 1987. As a result the four largest relief organizations (the Red Cross, *Caritas Neerlandica*, the Ecumenical Relief Foundation and NOVIB) pooled their lobbying efforts in order to gain the support of the major TV broadcasting companies and launched a nationwide campaign for the victims of the great drought in Ethiopia, Sudan and other African countries.

During tough and intensive negotiations that lasted for more than two weeks, the TV managers unconditionally demanded that:

- relief organizations join forces and use one common bank account number in all fund-raising appeals to the public;
- other Dutch organizations involved in similar relief operations also be associated with this campaign, to ensure that all the major political and religious tendencies embodied by the different relief organizations would pool their efforts.

And that is what happened. Eleven relief organizations reached an agreement on the division of the expected proceeds and organized common information activities aimed at generating as much publicity as possible in all the media during the campaign period.

That particular campaign was a success, raising a total of 75 million guilders. The Netherlands Red Cross was allocated 21% of this sum, enough to become one of the main financial contributors to the League and ICRC relief operations.

The support offered by all TV and radio broadcasting companies was tremendous. Because this time the content of the messages was quite complex. After all, why yet another appeal for Ethiopia after the great campaign of 1985 that ended with a final credit balance of 125 million guilders? The relief organizations had urged TV producers to make programmes with the emphasis on information and not on entertainment. And so during the last week before Christmas 1987 a special TV news bulletin on Africa was broadcast every evening directly after the main eight o'clock news. On the last evening of the week a 90-minute TV show on Africa was broadcast during prime time. During that December the relief organizations jointly produced news bulletins with information about all their respective relief operations. They succeeded in distributing 450,000 special campaign sheets and 120,000 posters through a common campaign secretariat. A wave of altruistic feeling swept across the country and spurred hundreds of schools, sports clubs and local committees into action.

When the total result of 72 million guilders was made public it was clear to the relief organizations concerned that this kind of common fund-raising drive in cases of major emergency should be continued. Other joint campaigns followed: in 1988 for Bangladesh and Sudan (flooding) and for Armenia, in 1989 for Ethiopia and Romania. These led to the conclusion, in October 1988, of a formal agreement for common fund-raising and information activities in times of large-scale emergency.

The Netherlands Red Cross receives a fixed proportion (17%) of all proceeds. In some cases large amounts of money are divided up. For example after the earthquake in Armenia, apart from the churches, the Netherlands Red Cross was the main relief organization through which money could be channelled to the stricken area. As a consequence our National Society received 60% instead of 17% of the total amount raised during the Armenia campaign (3.2 million guilders).

The most recent success reaped by this common fund-raising method was of course the campaign for Romania, in which the Netherlands Red Cross again played a leading role in comparison with other Dutch relief agencies. As soon as it heard the news about the momentous events of Christmas 1989, the Netherlands Red Cross launched a public appeal for ready cash and for standard food parcels, which the public could deliver at Red Cross collection points all over the country. With the generous support of the public the Netherlands Red Cross was able to transport and distribute more than 150,000 parcels, worth more than 2.3 million guilders, to the regions of Sibiu and Brasov. Even more amazing was the result of the fund-raising campaign, which was greatly helped by an initiative of the first Dutch commercial TV station, RTL-Véronique, which succeeded in organizing within four working days a sparkling three-hour TV show on Romania, shown on the night of 30 December. On top of that the Post Office managed to print and distribute 4.7 million leaflets to all households before that date. After one week the credit balance exceeded 50 million guilders! Such a response is surely the dream of every professional communicator.

## **Conclusion**

For professional Red Cross communicators such as myself it is important to realize that such achievements would be impossible without the effective support of the media, especially television. Television has become a key factor for success.

A consequence of this situation is that the power of TV station managers regarding any plans for fund-raising campaigns is growing. This development is not necessarily desirable, as became evident during preparations for a media campaign in favour of the starving people of Ethiopia that was launched last January. At the beginning of November 1988, as soon as the first alarming figures from Ethiopia were received, the joint Dutch relief agencies started their efforts to

come to an agreement with the TV bosses on a new Ethiopia campaign.

We aimed at a campaign in the week before Christmas, which on former occasions had proved to be a very profitable period. But the media directors were by no means enthusiastic. They were not at all convinced that a catastrophe was imminent and attacked the credibility of our reports.

As later lobbying attempts remained vain, we decided to let the public know what was going on. This of course caused shock-waves in the Dutch media village of Hilversum. Then everyone became caught up in the events of Romania. The campaign for Ethiopia was finally carried out in the third week of January and yielded 17.5 million guilders for spending on relief. After these developments the relief organizations will have to review their position, and may have to search for alternative ways to put their message over to the public loud and clear.

**Marcel P.L. Vergeer**

**Marcel P.L. Vergeer**, 38, began his career as a teacher of geography. He joined the Youth Department of the Netherlands Red Cross in 1978, and four years later was transferred to the National Society's Affairs Department to take up the post of editor of the internal magazine published for the Society's 35,000 volunteers. Meanwhile he gained certificates in practical public relations skills and studied mass communication theory at the Rijksuniversiteit of Utrecht. In 1987 he was appointed editor-in-chief of the *Rode Kruis Koerier* and press officer for international affairs. Since then he has been actively involved in major radio and television campaigns to raise funds for the victims of drought in Africa (1987/88), flooding in Sudan and Bangladesh (1988), the earthquake in Armenia (1988) and, most recently, the events in Romania.

#### 4. COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC AT LARGE

## Communication excellence and the public at large

American Red Cross

by Ann Stingle and Bud Good

Henry Dunant very clearly understood the value of good communications or he never would have written *A Memory of Solferino*—a book that moved the conscience of nations to action. In the United States, Clara Barton, founder of the American Red Cross, was also a communicator. Unlike many of her time, she maintained good rapport with the press because she recognized the value of timeliness, human interest and repetition. What she conveyed to the public was an image of consistency and devotion to humanitarian ideals.

Today, communicating well is both a practical necessity and a moral obligation for those of us involved in the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. Without communication, we cannot gather the resources necessary to help the victims of conflict and disaster, nor can we assure donors that their contributed money has been wisely used to help those in need; without communication we cannot mobilize the attention of the world on behalf of those who otherwise would suffer unnoticed.

Accelerated change, conflict, innovation, and political turbulence crowd the environment with important messages of increasing number and complexity. Our audiences, whether they are the general public, school children or government officials, will not wait for us to make ourselves known, and will not make the effort to grasp precisely who we are and what we do. It is up to us to ensure that those facts are obvious to them the instant they open the envelope, pick up the brochure, see the ad, or read the article. It is up to each individual in the Movement—because we are all communicators on its behalf—to use whatever channels are at his or her disposal, to make the Movement known.



But the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is not the only organization to recognize the value of communication excellence. Today, many worthy organizations compete for attention and contributors. And the cold, hard truth is that members of our intended audience will choose others, no matter how good our services are, unless we are absolutely clear and consistent about who we are and what we do.

The need for absolute clarity in image is paramount, and is the essence of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement Identity Program, approved by the Council of Delegates in October 1989. That program is the centerpiece for a new communication strategy that has the potential to breathe new life into every element of the Movement.

## **The American Red Cross experience**

Everything we do as American Red Cross communicators is intended to equip our National Society to better serve the public. The advertising campaigns, promotional events and the steady flow of news are designed to acquaint the public with our services and our needs. Our internal communication efforts—our print periodicals, our major meetings, and our business television broadcasts—are designed to keep our field informed and unified in their efforts to serve. The thousands of educational and informative products that we produce each year are intended to enable our branches to reach out to the public with effective appeals and service programs.

Reaching the public with our messages is becoming a more competitive business as more and more organizations develop the ability to compete for the public's attention. The evolution of our information society will continue to demand the best that we can offer in our communication efforts with the public.

To meet challenges, the American Red Cross launched its *Identity Program* in 1987 after extensive study and market research. A key finding in the research was that, while the majority of people in the United States were aware of the American Red Cross and thought highly of our work, it was not an organization in which Americans would invest sufficient time or money to enable us to do all that was asked for us. In other words, as effective and well known as our programs were, we had not established the sort of relationship or dialogue with Americans that would ensure their support.

Part of our difficulty was our image. We were perceived as too large, often bureaucratic, somewhat untouchable. We gave our audience the impression that (1) we didn't need them, and (2) if they came to us they would find an institution, not *people* who care about them.

The essence of the American Red Cross Identity Program therefore focuses on developing a positive relationship between the people who represent the organization and the people for whom we exist. It also encourages those already involved in the Red Cross to have pride (without arrogance) in who we are and what we do.

The program, which has been operational for two years, has proven essential in forging a strong communications strategy for building public trust in the American Red Cross. It is available in both Spanish and English.

Already, significant results are being reported by our branches. For example, most branches have implemented the program, taking first steps in a long-term effort to focus precisely the American Red Cross image. This is true regardless of branch size or sophistication. The majority of those that have adopted the program are reporting tangible benefits. Many branches that have implemented the program are reporting evidence of a stronger public image. Many report that morale is up because Red Cross members know more about their organization and have a greater sense of pride in the organization. A significant number of the chapters are reporting greater success in recruiting volunteers and raising funds. All of this occurred in the first two years of a long-term program. Such quick results underscore the benefits of an identity program to our Movement.

## **Bringing the International Identity closer to home**

Because the American Red Cross currently has an identity program underway, our implementation of the International Identity Program may vary slightly from those of other National Societies, the League or the International Committee of the Red Cross. For those sectors of the Movement, the Movement's program should provide a framework for image-related objectives and lay the groundwork for all communication activities. In the United States, the international identity must be integrated into the program already in progress. Therefore, we are presenting it as an expansion or elaboration of the international aspects of our domestic identity program.

In addition to the audiences outlined in the Movement's Identity Program, the American Red Cross has further segmented the general public into the following three groups for purposes of building a

supportable image before the public. These audiences will be important to the effective communication of our international identity.

1. **Minorities** — By the year 2032, it is projected that minorities will represent a majority of the US population. Often, the unique language and culture of racial and ethnic minority groups require that we initiate special efforts to communicate with, serve, and involve minorities in the American Red Cross.

2. **Young Adults** (Ages 18-34) — Demographically, this group represents the future of the Red Cross. They are currently our blood donors and our course takers. We need to maintain their commitment to the American Red Cross and generate their financial and volunteer support.

3. **Prime-Age Workers** (Ages 35-50) — The prime-age worker group is growing the fastest and will soon be the largest age group in the US. Research has also shown that this is also the audience most likely to act on information they receive. To reach our objectives, we must offer needed programs and create a climate that encourages them to become involved in the Red Cross.

How are these audiences reflected in our communication activities? Here are a few examples:

- Greater use of minorities in campaigns which use advertising, media and promotion.
- Use of celebrity musicians who appeal to the two age groups for “March is Red Cross Month” promotion.
- Development of ethnic media lists.
- Continued expansion of national media relationships, concentrating on those media and approaches that will give us the greatest impact on our targeted audiences.
- Reinforcement of branch capacity to strengthen local media relationships and generate donations of time and print space, as well as positive press, in support of American Red Cross work.
- A promotional contest which showcased “young adults” already playing a part in the American Red Cross.
- Distribution of advertising and media components to “targeted” minority media.
- The development of promotion and advertising campaigns that feature Red Cross services of particular use to our target audiences.

It is within this context that international messages, including the International Identity Program, are being woven into American Red Cross communication strategies. The approach is audience specific, event specific and part of a multi-dimensional approach to communicating the Movement in the United States.

As with other National Societies this requires a two-prong approach to implementation: internally to American Red Cross volunteer and paid staff at the headquarters and branch levels, and externally to media, government, other agencies and the public at large.

## **Internal communication**

An estimated 75 percent of all American Red Cross information to external audiences takes place at the local level. Therefore, communication with our 2,800 branches in communities throughout the United States is important to solidifying our public communication activities. Steps in internal distribution of the International Identity Program include:

- Placement of articles in the national grassroots newsletter and other communication vehicles targeted to management and other internal audiences.
- Inclusion in all presentations on the Red Cross identity at national, regional, and branch meetings.
- Distribution to chapters of the Identity Statement and support documents.
- Provision to branches of suggestions and guidelines for the use of the International Identity Statement and how to integrate it into communications activities and channels.
- Continuing evaluation of feedback from Red Cross units on their usage of the International Identity Program.

## **External communication**

While awareness of the work of the International Movement among the American public is already high, most people are unsure about specifics. The image of the Movement lacks form and clarity. We believe, therefore, that all communication activities to external audiences must be sharply focused on the competence of the people of the Movement in providing the necessary assistance to people in need worldwide. In order to integrate the International Identity into American Red Cross communications we will:

- Design a communication plan targeted to external audiences which includes objectives and messages that reinforce the Movement identity.
- Incorporate into all press releases about the Movement a strong emphasis on people-to-people action, including the victims and the people of the Movement who act to protect human life and dignity and assist those victims. Because it is important to show an American linkage in communicating international messages to an American audience, American Red Cross participation is stressed in press coverage on Movement activities wherever possible.
- Take every opportunity, particularly through the media, to show international humanitarian law and the principles of the Movement as people-oriented, action-based and relevant to current issues of public interest.
- Ensure that photos on all brochures, posters and other print materials that communicate about the International Red Cross are of people in action, not of things, buildings or vehicles.
- Make sure that all leaders and other spokespersons are adequately trained for media interviews so that they project the image of compassion and commitment of the Movement.
- Because the best way to educate is through action, utilize all opportunities involving current events and Movement activity to demonstrate who the people of the Movement are, what they do and what they stand for.

Our plans also call for the International Identity Program closely to be woven into the messages and activities for the *Campaign for the Protection of War Victims* and other Movement communication and information efforts.

To summarize, we view the International Identity Program as a means of expanding and strengthening our own communication objectives with the American public as to who we are as a Movement and what we do to protect human life and dignity throughout the world.

## **Disaster communication**

While health, nutrition, safety and youth programs are important parts of Movement work, its real purpose is to help victims of conflict and natural disaster. Communications in such emergency situations offer excellent opportunities for highly visible coverage. But we must

never forget that disaster communication is a highly specialized field and one in which Movement expertise must be “state of the art”.

Communications played an important role for the American Red Cross in the fall of 1989 when the United States was hit by the worst series of disasters in American Red Cross history: Hurricane Hugo and the Northern California earthquake. Within 10 days an advertising campaign was designed, produced and distributed to Red Cross branches and media outlets. A press conference was conducted quickly in the midst of the hurricane wreckage which reached not only local press, but was also distributed by satellite to downlinks at broadcast stations across the country. Press officers were on duty 24 hours a day to take calls from the media.

Because we were able to communicate immediately and forcefully about American Red Cross activities to meet victim needs, we were able to capture the attention and support of media and the public, alike, at unparalleled levels. Thanks to the millions of contributed dollars, our Society has been able to help more American families victimized by disaster than in any single year in our history. This year has proven conclusively the unquestionable dependence of the Red Cross on effective communication with the public.

## Conclusion

Communication is the process by which our Movement tells the people of the world—be they government officials, earthquake victims, or a mother seeking a life-saving vaccination for her child—that we of the Red Cross and Red Crescent are here to help. Communication establishes with our audiences those particular principles of our mandate which set us apart from all other organizations, making us worthy of their trust.

As presented in the Identity Statement of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement:

*“The people of the Movement help anyone in urgent need. No regard is paid to political, racial, religious or ideological differences. No point of view or person is favoured over another. Neither influence nor pressure will ever alter these facts... This unique network has spanned generations, linking people around the world who share a commitment to prevent suffering and a readiness to protect human life and dignity—no matter whose, no matter where, no matter when”.*

Recent global events testify to the fact that our Movement will continue to keep pace with emerging needs and to mobilize the public to supportive action. Everyone in the Movement—National Societies,

League, and ICRC—must sharpen their ability to position the Movement in the forefront of humanitarian concern and action. As events unfold, our mission as members of the Movement is to ensure that human life and dignity are not trampled underfoot and forgotten, and that an important weapon in achieving our goal is our ability to communicate with excellence.

**Ann Stingle**  
**Bud Good**

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**Ann Stingle** is the International Communication Associate at the American Red Cross where she has worked in a number of capacities since 1966. She holds a Master of Arts Degree in International Communication from the American University in Washington. She was staff-on-loan to the International Committee of the Red Cross in 1985, and to the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in 1989.

**Bud Good** is the General Manager of Corporate Communication for the American Red Cross. He earned a bachelor's degree in journalism from George Washington University and did graduate work at Boston University School of Public Relations and Communications, Northwestern University, the University of Virginia, and the University of Texas. He has given leadership to a variety of American Red Cross communication activities throughout his 23-year Red Cross career. Under his guidance, American Red Cross communication staff have won numerous awards for outstanding achievement in the communication field.

**5. THE RED CROSS, THE RED CRESCENT  
AND THE MEDIA**

**Information services and the media:  
an ongoing dialogue**

**Salvadorean Red Cross Society**

**Origin and development of information services**

The Salvadorean Red Cross Society was founded on 13 March 1985. It has been in existence for 105 years, and so has a long record of service in the emergency situations that have arisen in El Salvador. These range from everyday emergencies in which it gives first aid, provides an ambulance service for sick and injured persons and processes and distributes blood, to major national disasters, especially earthquakes, and the internal conflict that has now been raging for more than ten years.

We can therefore say that the Salvadorean Red Cross Society's relations with the information media have developed almost naturally; the media look upon the Society as an important source of information, since it deals with emergencies every day.

Until 1974 the Society did very little to promote public relations and information through the media, and had no definite structure for that purpose. Since then however, the Salvadorean Red Cross Society has had to cope with many events of a social, and even political and military nature.

In 1976, the Society's headquarters were occupied by groups representing organizations which attempted to make use of the Society's enviable reputation to make demands incompatible with our Fundamental Principles.

These incidents led to talks between the organizations concerned and the Salvadorean Red Cross Society. The Society started by explaining what it and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent



Movement stood for, and went on to indicate how it was called upon to behave in order to comply with the Fundamental Principles.

It had such difficulty in getting its point of view accepted that it decided to abandon its headquarters and move into temporary premises in order to maintain its normal services to the general public.

The consequent reactions of various social groups and trade unions did not prevent the National Society from doing all it could to distance itself from anything that could endanger its impartiality and neutrality. It took part in activities that varied from acting as moderator to responding to appeals from the armed forces and the church, and even from organized dissident groups, so as to avoid making dangerous situations worse. There were moments of great tension in which all the personnel under the Red Cross banner showed outstanding courage, loyalty and public spirit.

## **Information policy**

As a result of these events the Salvadorean Red Cross Society formed a permanent Public Relations Department to make the Red Cross image better known in the community and update information policies inside and outside the National Society.

Once the Society's aims and rules of conduct had been stated, programmes for public relations, information and dissemination were drawn up.

To get the new organization going it was essential to engage a professional public relations expert, assisted by an information officer and a secretary, to keep in permanent contact with the information media.

## **Dissemination**

- ***The target groups:*** In 1980 the Society began to give talks to the government armed forces about the Red Cross, focusing on the rudiments of international humanitarian law.

This led to the setting up of a permanent programme, and for this purpose the ICRC and the Salvadorean Red Cross Society each appointed a dissemination delegate, so as to form a team.

A dissemination programme has to be tailored to its audience. Accordingly, model lectures were prepared for delivery to recruits, soldiers, NCOs and officers. Large-scale dissemination activities were started and printed matter was prepared for distribution—even to the insurgents, with the consent of the government high command.

As time went on the range of target groups was extended to include university students, lawyers, doctors, judges, secondary school students and primary school pupils. In the last few months the Society's teaching methods have included informal theatre directed by a local artiste who relies on volunteers from the public. Together they stage episodes that illustrate the basic rules of international humanitarian law. This method has aroused general interest in the armed forces as well as in the sector for which it was intended.

- ***Dissemination within the Society:*** Dissemination programmes inside the Salvadorean Red Cross Society have been designed to lend greater coherence to the reforms now taking place in it. This is especially the case in conflict areas, where many members have met with difficulties and misunderstanding from the very sectors served by the Society. Internal dissemination encourages the will to serve, improves members' efficiency, helps the Society to grow, and prevents the frustrations that may be caused by the conflict situation and the conditions under which members have to work.

## **Relations with the media**

The Salvadorean Red Cross Society has always enjoyed good relations with the information media, because its wide range of activities generates interesting news. The Public Relations Department is constantly in touch with the media and official sources, giving them information bulletins to support and promote the routine activities of all the National Society's departments and services, as well as special fund-raising events and disaster relief operations.

As a result knowledge of the Fundamental Principles and of international humanitarian law has been fairly widely disseminated throughout the entire population. However, the events of November 1989, when fighting flared up again in and around the capital city, San Salvador, were a new experience demonstrating that more intensive dissemination was necessary using every possible communications medium open to us.

The characteristics of modern armed conflict, particularly its shift from rural to urban areas, have given rise in recent months to various incidents in which the Salvadorean Red Cross Society's ambulances were attacked, its first-aiders injured and many restrictions imposed on it in its work of caring for victims.

Stricter security measures were introduced and these, together with the public spirit of all its members, have kept alive the humanitarian activities that are the Society's primary purpose.

This experience, and the experiences casting doubt or suspicion in political and military circles and even among the civilian population on our conduct in applying the Fundamental Principles, prompted us to resume broadcasting jointly with the ICRC. Our broadcasts now reach the entire country.

## **Staff training**

Following the setting up of the National Training Centre, which is under the responsibility of the National Voluntary Service Directorate, various projects are being launched to provide all the skills needed for improved administrative and operational development. The Nordic countries are funding these activities. We consider that many of the goals of the training programmes will be reached by 1992.

## **The Identity Programme**

El Salvador has many organizations resembling the Red Cross, using similar emblems to identify themselves and composed mainly of dissident members of the Salvadorean Red Cross Society. Most of their activities imitate those of the National Society, so much so that occasionally they try to “steal” victims from it. Worse still, some people think these organizations belong to the Red Cross. Some members of our National Society even think there is rivalry between these organizations and our Society, and have begun to “compete”.

Information and dissemination have finally convinced people that belonging to the Red Cross means belonging to a unique organization whose very uniqueness gives a hallmark to its members’ conduct.

This indicates the lines to be followed by the Movement’s Information Policy (the “Identity Programme”). Naturally, if we are to succeed in having this “image” accepted as the standard throughout the National Society, all its members have to make a special effort and show good will.

## **Training programmes for instructors**

We have always maintained that although we may have the best technicians for relief, rescue, first aid and so on, if they do not believe in the Red Cross doctrine, and especially in applying it, they will not have the “Red Cross spirit”. We must all be first-class disseminators who know what we are, what we are doing and why we are doing it.

We have launched a nationwide programme in all our 52 branches to train communication instructors. Their first target will be the 6,000 members of the Salvadorean Red Cross Society. With the help of the Public Relations Department, each instructor will use information to familiarize the public with the Society's aims, first of all by making known what we do (our daily tasks and more exceptional ones). We are sure that "selling" our news will always be a challenge, but we also know that this is the only way we can win the understanding, trust and support of the public it is our job to serve.

### **Programmes to foster contacts with the media**

In recent months we have held seminars for the communications media which have been attended by representatives of the press, radio and television, and government information services. These seminars have given satisfactory results. We have been invited to take part in special programmes, and documents have been published describing the activities of the Salvadorean Red Cross Society and of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

### **Prospects for the future**

We are aware that much remains to be done, particularly as outstanding events of interest to the press do not happen every day, and although our activities are to be seen all the time they may not always be regarded as newsworthy. However, we are convinced that we must go on applying the Movement Identity Programme as the best way of raising awareness among all the members of our National Society, we will be the best communicators of all.

We shall continue to "saturate" all the media with our news and use this means, together with our dissemination programmes, as an additional way of attaining our objectives.

**Public Relations Department  
Dissemination and Information Department  
Executive Secretariat  
Salvadorean Red Cross Society**

# The Red Cross and the media: mutually beneficial relationship

**Bulgarian Red Cross**

**by Encho Gospodinov**

## **1. The Bulgarian Red Cross and the media**

Friday 5 May 1989, 9.00 a.m. Three days before Bulgaria and the whole world were to mark World Red Cross Day, the Head of the International Relations Department of the Bulgarian Red Cross, Alexander Marinov, and the journalist writing this article, were at the Radio Sofia studio where one of the most popular radio programmes, "Good Morning", was being broadcast. We were taking part in a live broadcast in which, in the course of two hours, we would have to describe the activities of such an incredible humanitarian organization as the Red Cross. The audience was cross-examining us. The girls at the telephones could hardly manage to write down all the questions.

Meanwhile a direct telephone line with Geneva and Moscow had been established and listeners could speak directly to people at the League and the ICRC, as well as a Soviet Red Cross representative. Five months had already elapsed since the nightmarish earthquake in Armenia, and the Bulgarians who had collected donations for the Armenian people wanted to know how the money had been used. According to a public opinion poll, this programme for the Red Cross had an audience of about two million persons.

October 1985. The *Pogled* weekly, which with 427,000 copies has the biggest circulation in Bulgaria, had published a series of reports about a group of young Swedish Red Cross volunteers helping drought-stricken Ethiopia to restore some of its devastated forests. Within several days the newspaper office was flooded by letters from young Bulgarians sympathizing with the Red Cross and willing to go and help Ethiopia.

June 1986. The same newspaper had published a series of reports covering the activities of an ICRC team in Nicaragua. One of them described the assistance of the Swedish Red Cross for children in the border region between Nicaragua and Honduras. Both the newspaper office and the Bulgarian Red Cross received dozens of offers to organize a relief operation for the Nicaraguan children.

These examples are probably enough to show the regular contact between the Bulgarian Red Cross and the media. This channel has always been there but in recent years, thanks to the new political context established in Eastern Europe, and also thanks to *glasnost*, *perestroika* and the desire to build a *common European home*, the ideas and principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement have become more tangible and closer to many ordinary people of different generations in Bulgaria. For the first time in decades, there is much talk of compassion, of human rights and international humanitarian law, the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols, and of the heritage of Henry Dunant and the lessons of Solferino.

The flurry of Red Cross themes on the pages of Bulgarian newspapers and magazines came unexpectedly after a somewhat dramatic event in 1984, when three Bulgarians working in Angola were taken hostage by UNITA and the ICRC played a decisive role in their release. Swiss citizens Thierry Germond, now ICRC Delegate General for Europe, and his colleague Gérard Favrod suddenly became heroes in the eyes of thousands of Bulgarians. It was then that for a number of people the Red Cross was transformed from a myth and an emblem into something real, a symbol of hope.

Some time later came the tragic drought and famine in Africa, and the example of a Bulgarian journalist then working with the League's Information Department was followed by some of his colleagues. At that time a lot of Bulgarians learned (*glasnost* had not yet entirely prevailed) that in Ethiopia Swiss citizens were distributing American flour to starving Ethiopians, sometimes using Soviet aircraft as well. Those Swiss citizens were members of the ICRC, and people were surprised to hear that the Ethiopians depended on their friends from the democratic countries and that Africa was not, as had been instilled in the minds of Bulgarians, being saved by the USSR alone. A report of this kind in *Pogled*, covering ICRC activity in Nicaragua, was reproduced in a Soviet newspaper with a circulation of 3,000,000, an unprecedented event in Soviet journalism. Nowadays situations like that sound amusing, but then they were an ideological reality.

So gradually a constant "Red Cross lobby" came into being among Bulgarian journalists. Their pure sympathy for this humanitarian movement was complemented by the mutual need for co-operation. Access to the mass media means publicity, influence and support for the Red Cross Movement. For journalists, on the other hand, the Red Cross is a reliable and objective source of information, unburdened by either political or ideological considerations. It is a source of interesting and purely humanitarian news, impossible to obtain elsewhere. The dramatic situation in Armenia and particularly the events in Romania, where the Bulgarian Red Cross, the ICRC and subsequently the League took active part in solving some urgent issues, opened the newspapers, radio and television in Bulgaria still wider to the Red Cross Movement and its ideas. It became clear that the relations between the mass media and the Red Cross were already soundly enough established for the mechanisms of co-operation to be set in motion whenever necessary.

The *International Festival of Red Cross and Health Films in Varna* is proving to be yet another way of disseminating Red Cross ideas. Its management is well aware of the meaning of such co-operation with the media during the Festival. Besides critical reviews and analyses of films on current Red Cross subjects, the festival enables a lot of journalists to meet outstanding Red Cross personalities from all over the world. For nearly a fortnight, the TV, radio and daily newspapers keep public opinion focused on the Varna Festival, and hence on the noble ideas and principles left to us by Henry Dunant. For some time past it has become a tradition during the festival to organize regular Red Cross and Red Crescent International Communications Workshops with information officers from various National Societies and well-known journalists. Programmes are elaborated there to put the Movement's information into practical effect.

Holding meetings and news conferences is a routine practice of the Bulgarian Red Cross whenever a more significant event takes place. When the relief operation was organized for Armenia or Romania, the daily presence of the Bulgarian Red Cross spokesman on the TV screen was considered very valuable and necessary. Recently there has been increasingly marked competition among Bulgarian journalists as to who will be the first to gain access to the Bulgarian Red Cross as an interesting and possibly unique source of information, particularly in cases such as major natural disasters or international conflicts. Eminent League or ICRC representatives from Geneva also attract the attention of Bulgarian journalists when they are in Sofia. In principle the Bulgarian Red Cross always organizes meetings or press confer-

ences with them, but the opportunity for the mass media to obtain first-hand information about events in one or another part of the world where the League or ICRC are operating is never missed.

Something more—a practical system has been worked out in Bulgaria to use the League and ICRC bulletins and the *Red Cross, Red Crescent* magazine. When these publications reach *Pogled*, the newspaper, being an edition of the Union of Bulgarian Journalists, immediately “sells out” the most interesting news in them to other newspapers, radio and TV. It does so because every professional is well aware that all newspapers and electronic media programmes need brief human interest stories telling of humanitarian relations, human suffering, compassion and people’s willingness to assist the needy.

Whenever an earthquake or an armed conflict occurs somewhere in the world, a lot of Bulgarian journalists already know whom to approach in Geneva, i.e. the League and ICRC spokesmen. Nothing is easier in such cases than to ring up and find out from Geneva whatever one wants to know. This bridge of trust between a number of Bulgarian mass media and Geneva is extremely popular and useful.

On-the-spot stories are the next logical step in such co-operation. There are several Bulgarian journalists who have already covered the activities of the Bulgarian Red Cross, the League or ICRC “on the spot”. Such an opportunity is a great temptation for the press and there is no doubt that this form of co-operation should be encouraged, as the audience’s confidence, hence the dissemination of Red Cross ideas, could be gained more easily by means of real-life examples in actual situations. Such stories from Nicaragua, El Salvador, Romania, Armenia, Mexico, Ethiopia and Sudan have already appeared on the pages of periodicals.

The Bulgarian Red Cross has other ways of working with journalists, such as organizing workshops on specific themes, e.g. the dissemination of international humanitarian law. A workshop of this kind was recently held at a mountain resort and attended by young and promising journalists on whom the Bulgarian Red Cross could rely in future. On some such occasions (and there are more than just a few) lectures are delivered by ICRC staff.

The various National Societies have different traditions of activity. If, however, the good image of the Bulgarian Red Cross is clearly defined in public opinion, this is largely due to its Mountain Rescue and Water Safety Services. A country with hundreds of thousands of local and foreign tourists, where tourism is an industry, undoubtedly needs an institution taking care of these people in all seasons. The work of the Bulgarian Red Cross in this respect gives rise to feelings



of confidence and goodwill in people, partly because the mass media keep the public informed about the Bulgarian Red Cross Mountain Rescue and Water Safety Services and the wonderful job these professionals are doing, thus prompting general admiration. Particularly in winter, the high season for skiing, and in summer when many people go swimming, the attention of the mass media is constantly focused on these Bulgarian Red Cross services and their activities. Special events to mark anniversaries such as *Supercamp Solferino 1989* or the 125th Anniversary of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, are another way of familiarizing people with the activities of the Bulgarian Red Cross. Moreover, every year on 8 May the media come out with publications or broadcasts devoted to the Red Cross. On returning from Solferino and Geneva, the Bulgarian Youth Red Cross workers were invited to Radio Sofia, where they told the national audience about their ideas and impressions of this big event for our Movement.

## 2. The future

All this shows that there is steady co-operation between the Bulgarian Red Cross and the media of our country. It does not mean, however, that we have reached the limits of this co-operation. The information policy of the Movement set forth in the *Identity Programme* is taken very seriously, and we are already working towards implementation of the ideas it contains, all the more since a firm basis for further development already exists.

Some of the steps taken to implement the *Identity Programme* include the investment in young people, mostly journalists and lawyers who could continue to disseminate knowledge of international humanitarian law and Red Cross activities with new force and ideas. To this end, young journalists are mobilized and co-operation with them is established on a sound basis. For example when ICRC Delegate General for Europe Thierry Germond visited Sofia, an agreement was concluded with the President of the Union of Bulgarian Journalists, Stefan Prodev, to the effect that a group of young journalists from various mass media would go to Geneva to become acquainted with ICRC activities in the field of international humanitarian law. Afterwards they could be relied upon as a part of the "Red Cross press lobby".

Another idea is that in future any ICRC and League staff specialized in international humanitarian law or communication should, when

visiting Bulgaria, deliver one or two lectures for students of journalism at Sofia University.

That, too, is part of our programme to instill knowledge, experience and sympathy in young people who could provide reliable support for our Movement.

We shall similarly continue to familiarize young journalists from developing countries with the principles, ideas and activities of the Red Cross Movement. This task is already being fulfilled. The International Institute of Journalism, whose director is the author of this article, has its headquarters in Sofia. Once a year young journalists from the Third World come to the institute for professional training, and it is there that they are introduced to some aspects of the Movement. Lectures have been given there in recent years for journalists from Afghanistan, Nigeria, the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, Ethiopia, Laos, Mozambique, Angola and Benin.

In order to make Red Cross ideas more attractive, journalists should be given more interesting, more human and to some extent even "dramatic" information. It would be very useful if outstanding representatives of the world of art and culture could be involved in making Red Cross activities popular.

When armed conflicts are in the news, it would be good to publish the principles of international humanitarian law and the ideas underlying the Geneva Conventions in military newspapers read widely by high-ranking officers. This is already being done by the Bulgarian military press.

There are also plans to show the Red Cross emblem more often on the TV screen, to gain wider support among young people, to focus attention on special target groups, etc.

So step by step, relying on already established traditions and searching for new ideas, we can not only make Red Cross activities better known but also prepare our Movement for the 21st century, when other humanitarian organizations will probably emerge. The Red Cross will have to be ready for them, and for the challenges of the future.

**Encho Gospodinov**

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– IV –

**INFORMATION SUPPORT PROGRAMME**

**Support for information services  
in developing National Societies**

**Finnish Red Cross**

**by Helena Korhonen**

The strength of the Red Cross and Red Crescent resides in its structures, in its humanitarian mandate as defined in the Geneva Conventions and in the values enshrined in international humanitarian law. The Movement's Fundamental Principles further define its aims and give widely accepted guidelines for its activities. The National Societies with their local branches and volunteers provide the physical network that completes the structure and now covers the entire world.

But a formal structure, however well organized, does not guarantee smooth implementation of our primary task, which is to bring assistance to people in need. The real impact of the Movement is directly proportionate to the degree of understanding of its aims and principles on the part of governments and the public at large. To promote this understanding, facilitate action and find adequate means for that action, communication in all its forms is the key. This is an area that should be given greater attention and priority, particularly within Red Cross/Red Crescent development programmes.

**Image or illusion?**

Our Movement can hardly claim to be in the forefront in using research to build strategies. We have a tendency to believe what suits us rather than actively to seek knowledge. Since many National Societies, particularly in our Western world but also in developing coun-

tries, have grown and become established thanks to the valuable work of well-known and respected personalities, we tend to take a favourable image and acceptance for granted. Because we appear in the headlines in newspapers in Finland, in Zambia or in Bangladesh, we like to think that people *know* about us and our work. Although little research has been done on the subject, there are grounds for reasonable doubt as to whether this perception of our image is correct.

The situation varies greatly from country to country. The more “developed” National Societies with old, well-established organizations and greater material and professional resources quite naturally score image advantages. Particularly in our prosperous, Western countries the Red Cross is quite often THE organization enjoying all the benefits of a good image and ample support. When we go to less affluent countries with National Societies struggling to develop, we enter a different world.

In January 1990 the Finnish Red Cross (FRC) conducted a survey on its image among a sample representative of the entire population. A few findings are worth mentioning: 80% of those interviewed mentioned the Red Cross when asked to name non-governmental organizations. Out of these, 60% mentioned the Red Cross first. This shows a sound knowledge of the organization, but an even more interesting finding emerged. Using a scale of 4 to 10, people were asked to judge certain matters, among them “the importance of Red Cross work as a whole”. Here the FRC scored 9—almost the highest possible grade.

As a comparison, when working in southern Africa, moving out into rural areas in the middle of nowhere, it felt good and safer to have the emblem on the car. Passing road blocks was easier; the police and the army recognized it as a “special” sign. But it was not uncommon that people out in the villages had never heard of the organization, and they certainly had no notion of what it stood for.

## **Information services**

Using the term “information services” indirectly implies that policies and strategies, methods and networks are in place. It further conjures up visions of professional staff, with well-defined job descriptions and adequate equipment to deal with often complex channels of communication, ranging from demanding news reporters to donors

wanting feedback information on how their support is being used. It also suggests that substantial financial means are available to produce and distribute information. This picture is true of the "developed" National Societies of the North. Moreover, the need for a well-functioning information service is accepted by the leaders of these Societies, at least in broad terms. Private satellite networks for internal communication are not unheard of, and most of those Societies enjoy more modest technical means for the same purpose. An example of the latter is telefax machines, which are quite commonly used to speed up and facilitate the exchange of information as a basis for emergency action as well as in the daily routine.

Has this situation, taken for granted in "developed" Societies, influenced our attitudes and thinking? Do we tend to generalize and assume that since we as participating Societies also work in developing countries, it automatically means that the Red Cross/Red Crescent is equally well known and enjoys such facilities all over the world? Have we fallen into the trap of believing that the emergency, health and other programmes we implement as partners with our sister Societies in developing countries speak for themselves in spreading the basic message? Do we presume that since there is an Information Officer in almost every developing National Society there is necessarily an information service?

Judging from the measure of support given to the development of information strategies and systems within the general framework of development assistance, there is reason to fear that the above misconceptions are quite widespread. In addition, it indicates that certain perceptions of image, such as being universally well-known and accepted, are to a considerable degree coloured by the status enjoyed by the Western, "well-developed" Societies.

Moving from North to South, analysing the concept of "information service", a totally different picture emerges. In order to highlight the differences—bearing in mind that this is not necessarily true of all developing Societies, even though many elements can be found at least in the Societies of which I have personal experience—with extreme simplification the situation could be described as follows.

There are Information Officers in developing National Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies, and as a rule they are also in charge of fund-raising. The incumbent occupies an office at headquarters but cannot fall back on a policy, strategy, a proper plan of action or a budget. If there is a budget, the Information Officer has seldom had any part in its planning and rarely has any control over it. Information,

too, often means work in isolation; internal communication and co-ordination even at headquarters level leaves much to be desired. There are pressures to “produce” but no clear guidelines as to what and for whom. Transport within the country is problematic because any vehicles are “earmarked” for various other programmes. Furthermore, the Information Officer sometimes plays the role of Public Relations Officer for the Society’s leaders rather than for the Society itself. As for fund-raising, he or she has to raise funds without actually using any funds and, quite often, without any clearly defined plans or targets.

The basic role of the information service has not been defined. What are its aims? What are the main target groups? What is the message to be communicated to those target groups? What channels are available? All these are questions that ideally should find answers in defined policies and strategies, but these are sadly lacking.

Information is not an end in itself. Having an Information Officer among the staff does not necessarily mean that there is an information service. Information is a support service, a way of promoting the Red Cross principles and ideals alongside the regular activities of a Society, and should be seen as a management tool. This in turn requires management to define policies and strategies, the role and position of the information service in the existing structures, and the service’s duties and responsibilities.

At a time when some developed Societies are building their own satellite communications network, many Red Cross/Red Crescent Information Officers in developing countries lack even the most basic tools: typewriters (not to speak of word processors or desk-top production facilities!), cameras, tape-recorders, etc. Access to radio is still rare, although that is the most powerful medium for communication in Third World countries. Information Officers often find it difficult even to obtain paper for newsletters and film for documenting the Society’s work.

Professional competence is vital to building an information service. Basic training in journalism or mass communication is only a starting point. A Red Cross/Red Crescent Information Officer frequently has to be a jack-of-all-trades who knows how to raise funds as well as how to produce radio programmes, press releases and newsletters. Additional training and the possibility of sharing experience is urgently required. However, few developing National Societies have the financial resources to provide for this—a fact restricting the employment of experienced and professional staff in the first place.

## Development assistance

Development assistance, channelled through and co-ordinated by the League, is fairly new within the Movement. It was not until 1973 that the Development Commission was established to discuss and set guidelines for this type of assistance. And only in October 1989 were the draft Principles and Rules for Development Co-operation adopted by the League General Assembly. The best-known example of League development co-operation is the Southern Africa Programme (SAP), initiated in 1978. It is not within my competence to discuss the overall success or failure of the SAP, but a few remarks from the viewpoint of information development might be of use in making an evaluation.

The SAP set as one of its main goals *self-reliance* for the National Red Cross Societies of the region. This term itself can be interpreted in different ways depending on one's viewpoint.

Much of the support channelled to the Societies via the SAP was intended to strengthen infrastructure and develop programmes and activities. Indeed, during the first years of the programme, many Societies took on their core staff and built up a management structure. With slight variations from country to country, what could be called headquarters functions were established, regional and branch development was initiated and certain basic programmes such as first-aid training and health activities started. During this period the Societies also employed Information Officers.

The League sent technical delegates to many Societies and co-ordinated substantial funds for development. In those years the ICRC also implemented a massive dissemination campaign aimed at making the Red Cross and its principles better known in that conflict-torn region. A variety of methods was used in the campaign, ranging from cartoons to work books for children and young people in school.

The League organized some workshops in the early 80s with the aim of improving Information Officers' skills in both information and fundraising.

However, in retrospect, long-term support for development of effective information services was not integrated into the overall development strategy. Whereas many programmes benefited from outside advisers, Information Officers were largely left to work on their own. Some *ad-hoc* training and support for specific projects was provided, but that cannot be described as long-term support based on continually available and coherent assistance.

Why was this so? How could self-reliance and sustainable development be envisioned without emphasizing information as part of the approach?

There are no obvious answers to these questions. One explanation might be the overriding preoccupation with action at that time and in those circumstances; and also the donor-oriented outlook of those early, learning years. It was far more popular among donors to provide funds for direct assistance programmes—always a good incentive for raising additional funds—than it was to support something as abstract as information. Having been myself in charge of information and fund-raising in a major donor Society at that time, I can only plead guilty to this attitude.

In the recent “Ten Years of SAP” evaluation we see the results. A great deal has been achieved, but fund-raising (or financial development, as I would prefer to call it) and information activities leave much to be desired.

Although I have used the example of the SAP here, there is reason to believe that the situation is not very different elsewhere in the Red Cross/Red Crescent world. Indeed, the region covered by SAP, has, in spite of the above, received more support in recent years than any other region in the developing world.

## **Current assistance**

The adoption of the *Information Policy of the Movement* by the Council of Delegates in October 1989 is a very significant and welcome step forward. The policy rightly gives priority to promoting the Movement and its ideals rather than the various institutions operating under the emblem. This is of the utmost importance in developing follow-up assistance strategies and in co-ordinating action and the use of available resources—human, material and financial. The aim should now be to consolidate an approach promoting humanitarian goals and the specific, unique task of the organization worldwide, without losing sight of the special characteristics of different National Societies, the League and the ICRC in this context.

Being new to development co-operation, the Red Cross/Red Crescent must continuously reassess its work and ask itself the question: “on whose terms are we developing?”



During my three years as Public Affairs Delegate in southern Africa, I learned a few important lessons. We do not necessarily promote information in a developing Society with press kits, posters and films *produced in Europe*. The best training for an Information Officer might not be a period spent as a trainee with the League or ICRC information services in Geneva or study visits to the Nordic countries. The most profitable exchanges of experience need not go in the North-South direction; they should rather concentrate on *South-South co-operation*. Likewise, our Western fund-raising campaigns with their modern, harsh and aggressive marketing methods are useless in a developing country where a football tournament can prove far more effective and where much more emphasis should be laid on income-generating ventures, preferably combined with the idea of service to the community.

From a participating-Society/donor point of view, being partners in development should mean planning from the centre out rather than from the top down. We should not work *for* but *with* our partner Societies. Promoting the Movement rather than its parts implies close co-ordination, particularly between the League and the ICRC. Both can mobilize funds for information support but if one institution does not know what the other is planning or already supporting, the result can only be damaging to an integrated approach.

Continuity is a key concept in any development assistance. If our true intention is to achieve sustainable development, we must commit ourselves for several years. One-year programmes must become a thing of the past. Apart from anything else, it is unfair to sister Societies in developing countries to demand commitments on their part while the assisting party reserves the unilateral right to decide on contributions on a year-to-year or case-by-case basis. Nowhere in the “developed” Red Cross Societies has a deeply rooted and widespread understanding of the Movement and its activities been achieved without years of patient work, continuously redefined strategies and the adoption of new approaches following failures. It requires years to build a base and develop ways and means—and even once all this is in place, the network still needs continuous effort to keep it viable.

Well-planned and well-implemented programmes and activities do carry the Red Cross/Red Crescent message. In fact, they provide the “product” that any good information service needs to “market” and “sell”. You cannot sell a product that does not exist—but a good product alone is of no use to anyone unless it is made known to those who can benefit from it. This simple analogy serves to show that information development must be an integral part of any development

process that aims to promote the Red Cross/Red Crescent's work and goals, with the ultimate aim of creating better understanding and respect for humanitarian values and human life.

## Priorities for the future

The adoption of an Information Policy is an important first step on the road towards creating real information services in developing Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies. The next steps should be to transform the policy into a plan of action and to secure resources for long-term assistance. This inevitably means drawing on commitment and sharing experiences and resources which are largely available in the "developed" National Societies.

The adoption of the policy also indirectly signals a preparedness and a commitment within the Movement to give active support to development along the lines defined by the policy. Otherwise we shall have created false expectations and simply added another document to the archives.

Development is a two-way street; in Red Cross/Red Crescent terms, it involves a partnership between operating and participating National Societies. Partnership in turn means *equality* and genuine *sharing* and *commitment*. Those who possess the means must be prepared to support and share; those in need of assistance must define their aims and objectives as well as the type of assistance needed.

Experience in southern Africa and surveys carried out in other parts of the world highlight the need for assistance in planning, in financing, in providing basic equipment and in training.

Information should not be seen as a fire brigade which is called upon in emergencies or a service intended simply to prepare the ground for specific events. It should be seen as continuous communication, using all available means, building awareness of the Red Cross/Red Crescent bit by bit in every country. Like all other activities, information requires plans and strategies based on the message we want to convey. It must be emphasized that the goals and policies must be set by the National Society leadership and management. The Information Officer's role is to implement, but, as a professional, he or she is also an initiator, a co-ordinator and an evaluator. He or she represents the voice and the opinion of the outside world in the Society.

Planning and budgeting skills are not usually included in the training of journalists. They require additional training and normally develop only with experience. Support for the acquisition of these skills should be a top priority in any assistance scheme, and should include training, follow-up and evaluation and provision of expert advice when needed.

Nothing can be achieved without funds. Promotional material, newsletters, radio programmes, basic investments in income-generation and marketing—all require appropriate funding. However, operating Societies should also be prepared to invest in information. External assistance should be matched to internal commitment. Production of the material needed should be planned and scheduled according to local circumstances. A good information service knows how to reach the different target groups in the country. Promotional material cannot be created without sufficient knowledge of the local culture and tradition. Again, support can and should be available, for the actual production costs as well as for developing creative skills in transmitting the message by various means—from radio programmes and drama to pamphlets and posters.

If we have solid plans and have secured financial assistance, we still need equipment. The basic need is not high technology. Typewriters, cameras and film (and the ability to use them!), together with tape recorders with rechargeable batteries and sturdy enough to survive dust and bumpy roads, already stand us in good stead. We must take care, however, not to encourage attitudes whereby developing National Societies are left to work with primitive and sub-standard equipment. If we are serious about development and want real progress along with greater cost-effectiveness, we must be prepared to invest in modern facilities with increased production capacity, which in the long run will improve output and create savings. By co-ordinating purchases of equipment, the League and the ICRC, in co-operation, could make substantial savings and at the same time ensure more equitable access to, and distribution of, the technical facilities and services needed in information work. Participating Societies should commit themselves to co-financing these initial investments, often beyond the reach of a developing National Society.

The basis for all development is training—continuous training and retraining. All the above-mentioned ways of improving information services require training. Isolated, *ad-hoc* courses and workshops are not the solution. Training in itself requires a long-term strategy in which each new step rests firmly on previous experience. Training

should be accompanied by follow-up and evaluation to make sure that all needs and skills are adequately covered.

This is the most demanding aspect of development assistance. It requires ample financial and human resources—starting, once real needs have been defined, with the training of those who are going to train. In the initial phase, the participating Societies with established information services and broad experience should be prepared to share their knowledge. At the same time, local and regional resources should be identified and mobilized. Co-operation and joint training programmes with existing research and development centres in different parts of the world should be encouraged and actively sought.

Exchange programmes to promote sharing of experience as well as pilot projects in some National Societies could supplement formal training as a means of developing human resources.

## In conclusion

Results such as those quoted earlier from Finnish Red Cross image research cannot be achieved overnight. At the same time, such findings prove that they *can* be achieved. It is basically a question of commitment to a goal and being prepared to invest on a long-term basis. Neither activities alone—however efficient they may be—nor an information service alone can create awareness and understanding of the Movement's basic role and principles. But a combined approach, where we ensure equal support for development of the “product” and for “marketing methods”, will in the long run help achieve the Movement's primary aim: to bring assistance to those in need.

**Helena Korhonen**

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**Helena Korhonen** has worked for the Finnish Red Cross since 1973. Initially an Information Officer, she was appointed Director of Information in December 1981. Apart from information activities, her responsibilities included raising funds for international assistance. From March 1986 to July 1989 she was based at the League Regional Delegation in Harare, Zimbabwe, as Public Affairs Delegate for Southern Africa. On her return to the Finnish Red Cross in August 1989, she was appointed Head of Development Programmes.

## ***TOWARDS A HUMANITARIAN MOBILIZATION***

### **ICRC President visits Africa**

Mr. Cornelio Sommaruga, President of the ICRC, travelled to Namibia, Kenya, Uganda and Zaire from 19 to 30 March 1990.

In his speeches, talks with heads of State and government representatives and meetings with National Society leaders, diplomats, academics and journalists, the ICRC President stressed the need for a humanitarian mobilization within the international community. He laid special emphasis on the following points:

- The ICRC spends half its field budget for its work in Africa. This major commitment corresponds to the needs resulting from the many armed conflicts and internal disturbances on the continent. The ICRC intends to continue its activities to help the civilian population, who are the main victims of these conflicts, and will adapt its emergency assistance wherever possible to ensure that the beneficiaries rapidly become self-sufficient.
- The ICRC will seek to ensure that the donor countries do not reduce their humanitarian aid to Africa in order to channel more funds into other regions of the world.
- The ICRC calls upon African States not to make the settlement of international or internal disputes a precondition for emergency humanitarian aid. Such aid must be given absolute priority.
- Concerned by the frequent misuse of the Red Cross and Red Crescent emblem, the ICRC appeals to States to do everything necessary to stop such abuse.

Finally, the ICRC President urgently appealed for the immediate, unconditional release of Elio Erriquez and Emanuel Christen, the two ICRC delegates held in hostage in Lebanon.

## ● **Namibia**

At the invitation of Mr. Sam Nuyoma, the newly elected President of the Republic of Namibia, President Sommaruga visited Namibia from 19 to 22 March to take part in the country's independence celebrations.

Accompanied by the heads of the ICRC delegations in the Republic of South Africa and Namibia, Mr. Sommaruga attended the ceremony at which the Namibian flag was raised and Mr. Nujoma was sworn in as President.

Together with League Secretary General Mr. Pär Stenbäck and Mr. Klaus Eriksen, President of the emergent Namibian Red Cross Society, Mr. Sommaruga was received by the Namibian Minister of Health. Their talks largely centred on the conditions for recognition of the new National Society and the assistance that the Geneva-based institutions could give.

During his stay, Mr. Sommaruga had talks with several eminent people attending Namibia's independence ceremonies. ICRC assistance to Angola and the question of visits to detainees there were the main subject of talks between the ICRC President and Mr. José Eduardo dos Santos, President of the People's Republic of Angola. Mr. Sommaruga also met South African Foreign Minister Mr. Pik Botha and several leading officials from his ministry to discuss allowing the ICRC to visit penal-law prisoners convicted of "unrest-related" offences. Finally, the ICRC President met Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization, to discuss matters of humanitarian concern in the Middle East.

## ● **Kenya**

Mr. Sommaruga was received on 23 March by Mr. Daniel Arap Moi, President of Kenya, together with Mr. Ndolo Ayah, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Co-operation, and Mr. Bethuel Kiplagat, Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Co-operation. Mr. Sommaruga was accompanied by leading members of the Kenya Red Cross, as well as the ICRC's Delegate General for Africa and the regional delegate based in Nairobi. The talks centred on the ICRC's operation in southern Sudan. The same day, President Sommaruga had talks with Mr. Mwai Kibaki, Minister of Health, on the future of the ICRC hospital in Lokichokio. Mr. Sommaruga then visited the Kenya Red Cross Society headquarters and announced an ICRC contribution to promote the development of the Turkana branch.

At a press conference, Mr. Sommaruga denounced misuse of the emblem in southern Sudan and again appealed for the release of the ICRC's two delegates being held hostage in Lebanon. At a subsequent meeting with representatives of the international press, he called for a humanitarian mobilization and described the ICRC's role in Africa, with particular emphasis on its independence, neutrality and impartiality.

## ● **Uganda**

Mr. Sommaruga, accompanied by the Delegate General for Africa and the head of the ICRC delegation in Kampala, was received by Mr. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda, on 27 March. With President Museveni were Mr. Ibrahim Mukiibi, Minister of Internal Affairs, Mr. Zak Kaberu, Minister of Health, Mr. Omara Atubo, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, and Mr. Eriya Kategaya, First Deputy Prime Minister.

President Museveni and Mr. Sommaruga reviewed at length the situation in Africa and in Uganda in particular. They also addressed the question of ICRC access to all districts throughout the country in order to continue visits to detainees, and discussed Uganda's ratification of the Additional Protocols, which is under consideration by the Ministry of Justice.

Mr. Sommaruga also met leading officials of the Uganda Red Cross Society and discussed co-operation between the two institutions. In a moving ceremony he presented the Henry Dunant Medal, awarded posthumously by the Standing Commission during the 1989 Council of Delegates, to the parents of Mr. Michael Egabu who was killed near Soroti on 9 January 1989, and spoke words of tribute to the families of two other ICRC staff members who were killed in an ambush near Luwero in November 1983.

Finally, President Sommaruga gave a lecture at Makerere University in Kampala and took part in a televised round-table discussion about the ICRC.

## ● **Zaire**

On 28 March Mr. Sommaruga had talks in Kinshasa with Mr. Mwando Nsimba, acting Prime Minister and Deputy First State Commissioner, Mr. Kamanda wa Kamanda, Chairman of the Judiciary Council, and Mr. Nimy Mayidiki Ngimbi, State Commissioner for Citizens' Rights and Liberties. Mr. Sommaruga spoke to them of the

ICRC's concern about the conflicts in neighbouring countries, before broaching the question of visits and assistance to detainees.

Accompanied by the Delegate General for Africa and the present and future heads of the ICRC regional delegation in Kinshasa, Mr. Sommaruga then went to Lumbumbashi, capital of the Shaba Region. He was received there on 29 March by Mr. Mobutu Sese Seko, President of the Republic of Zaire, together with Mr. Mokondo Bonza, Head of the President's Office, and Mr. Nkema Liloo, Head of Security Affairs in the President's Office. During their discussion, Mr. Sommaruga described the ICRC's activities in Angola and Sudan and asked President Mobutu for support. President Mobutu confirmed his country's willingness to further increase its co-operation with the ICRC for its visits and assistance to security detainees.

Mr. Sommaruga also gave a lecture at the University of Kinshasa and took part in a televised round-table discussion about the ICRC.

The ICRC delegation was furthermore received by representatives of the Red Cross Society of the Republic of Zaire, with whom they discussed the Society's statutes and activities.

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## War surgery seminar

*(Geneva, 30 March-1 April 1990)*

With its nine war surgery hospitals treating thousands of wounded people in various parts of the world, the ICRC has gained unique experience in this area.

In order to make use of what it has learnt and spread that knowledge to others, a war surgery seminar was organized by the ICRC's Medical Division at the institution's headquarters from 30 March to 1 April 1990. The seminar, which was opened by ICRC Vice-President Maurice Aubert, had the following objectives:

- recruit more surgeons to meet growing needs in the treatment of war victims;
- prepare surgeons for medical missions in the field and especially for the particular demands of war surgery;
- set up a coherent and rigorous system to classify wounds using ballistics to understand the effects of war injuries on the human body and their implications in terms of surgery.

During the seminar, some 40 surgeons from 16 countries heard experienced practitioners of war surgery describe the basic principles involved. Their talks, backed up by audio-visual presentations, provided participants as yet unversed in work in the field with an introduction to the specific problems encountered in treating war wounds.

The participants also took part in a workshop in which they learned to use certain specialized instruments of war surgery.

The seminar was a success and will therefore be repeated in 1991, as improving care for people wounded in armed conflict is a constant concern of the ICRC's Medical Division.

## *EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES*

*(March-April 1990)*

### **Africa**

#### **Angola**

In April, the ICRC was able to start reducing the amount of food it had been providing to the population living on the Planalto. With the beginning of the harvest season, the people could once again count to a certain extent on their own crops to survive. The ICRC's agricultural engineers already anticipate however, that the harvest will not suffice to cover the population's needs beyond the month of October. In the second half of April, the ICRC began a new seed distribution programme on the Planalto. This programme will benefit some 55,000 families, each of which will receive 2.5 kg of seed.

#### **South-eastern Angola**

At the end of March, ICRC delegates based in south-eastern Angola carried out a survey in the Mavinga area, which was the scene of heavy fighting between government forces and UNITA (National Union for the Total Independence of Angola) combatants. During their mission, the delegates saw some 15,000 people displaced because of the fighting and plans were made to provide them with material assistance and seed in May.

#### **Mozambique**

In addition to carrying out regular visits to persons detained for security reasons in prisons under the authority of the Ministry of Security, the ICRC organized a training seminar in the second half of March for the directors of Mozambican penitentiary establishments run by the Ministries of Justice, the Interior and Security.

Since the beginning of this year, ICRC delegates have been able to travel by road rather than by air. The authorities in Maputo first granted the ICRC permission to use the roads in Gaza, Nampula and Maputo provinces and then in Zambezia province. At the beginning of April, delegates went from Quelimane to Ile to provide several thousand displaced people with relief supplies and food. Along the way, the delegates made contact with local authorities, assessed the needs of the civilian population and took whatever measures were required. At the end of April, an ICRC team went to Iteculo in Nampula province, where it distributed relief and ICRC medical staff gave more than 300 consultations to the civilian population.

## **Uganda**

During the first week of April, the ICRC delegation in Uganda completed a major seed distribution in Gulu District. The programme began in mid-March, and some 40,000 families each received 5.4 kg of seed.

The ICRC also launched a major assistance operation for some 120,000 displaced people living in camps in the Kumi area. Blankets, kitchen sets and plastic sheeting were distributed to them in early April, and the ICRC's sanitary engineers made recommendations for improving sanitation in the camps. The nutritional status of the displaced population was assessed by a team of nurses and a nutritionist, and food is being supplied to the camps by the World Food Programme.

ICRC detention activities included providing material assistance (blankets, soap and clothing) as required to 2,182 people released on 27 April from Luzira and Jinja Main Prisons. Most of these people had been visited by the ICRC regularly during their detention.

## **Liberia**

Following the events that broke out in Liberia in December 1989, causing thousands of people to flee into Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire, the ICRC opened a delegation in Monrovia, with a staff of three whose work focuses mainly on Tracing Agency activities, the dissemination of international humanitarian law and co-operation with the National Society. In Côte d'Ivoire, an ICRC Tracing Agency delegate is now based in the city of Man, about 100 km from the border, where he is currently setting up a Tracing Agency network with the help of local staff. In Guinea, an ICRC office has been opened in Nzerekore.

## **Senegal/Mauritania**

In response to a request from the Mauritanian authorities that the ICRC repatriate two Senegalese fishermen captured on board a Guinean ship, on 20 April the regional delegate based in Dakar went to the border between Mauritania and Senegal to take charge of the two men.

## **Latin America**

### **Nicaragua**

Following the two amnesties approved by the National Assembly on 7 February and 14 March for security detainees, ICRC delegates in Managua went to all the places of detention regularly visited by the ICRC in the past to ascertain the exact number and identity of the detainees still being held there. The delegates also provided the detainees released on 14 March with food parcels, travel vouchers and clothing. Similar assistance had been provided to the detainees released on 7 February (see *IRRC*, No. 275, p. 131).

### **El Salvador**

During the reporting period, the ICRC delegation in El Salvador continued to concentrate its efforts on protecting and assisting the civilian populations. Its delegates had greater access to conflict areas, and were able to go, for the first time in months, to northern San Salvador and Cuscatlán departments. In addition, on 19 April the head of delegation met the Salvadorean Head of State, Mr. Cristiani. They discussed the memorandum the ICRC had handed over to the authorities in February on protection of the civilian population, respect for the emblem and the need for a smoothly functioning system to evacuate the wounded.

The delegation also kept up its detention activities, marking 438 visits to about 100 places of detention in March and April.

### **Ecuador**

At the invitation of the Ecuadoran government, a team of ICRC delegates based in Bogotá visited persons being held for security reasons in three places of detention in Quito and Guayaquil at the end of April. Material and medical assistance was distributed to the

detainees during the visits. The last series of visits to Ecuadoran places of detention took place in June 1989.

## Chile

Besides its regular detention activities, the ICRC delegation in Chile, in accordance with ICRC practice in this regard, looked into the situation of about 100 detainees who started a hunger strike in mid-March. A doctor visited places of detention in the capital and in Valparaíso, Concepción, Temuco and Rancagua to monitor the detainees' condition. The strike ended on 9 April without the ICRC having had to take any special medical action.

## Asia

### Afghan conflict

During the period under review, there were several favourable developments in ICRC activities in behalf of the victims of the Afghan conflict. In April, following negotiations with the parties involved, the ICRC was able to have a building in Bist Paika, near the town of Balkh (about 30 km from Mazar-i-Sharif), declared neutral and use it to treat some 50 people who had been wounded during clashes at the end of March between government troops and opposition forces. Three of the most severely wounded required special treatment and were taken to Mazar-i-Sharif then flown to the institution's hospital in Kabul in an ICRC aircraft. In addition, in Wardak province, delegates coming from Pakistan were for the first time able to carry out a joint mission with their colleagues based in Kabul. With the agreement of the parties concerned, three civilian wounded were evacuated to Kabul for treatment at the ICRC hospital. As was the case for the three patients from Bist Paika, these three persons were taken back to their homes after treatment.

The ICRC hospital in Kabul saw a large influx of wounded following the attempted *coup d'état* of 6 March. In 48 hours, more than 30 wounded were admitted and treated by the three surgical teams.

The ICRC also continued its protection activities, visiting prisoners and detainees throughout the country. On 8 April the delegates based in Mazar-i-Sharif began a third series of visits to security detainees in the city's main prison. Moreover, for the first time the ICRC gained access to detainees in the prisons of Samangan and Pul-i-Khumri.

Finally, ICRC teams based in Pakistan continued their visits to prisoners held by the opposition in Afghanistan's eastern provinces.

### **Sri Lanka**

In March and April the ICRC delegation in Sri Lanka continued its work, concentrating on visits to detainees, dissemination of international humanitarian law to the armed forces and Tracing Agency activities. Delegates visited almost 4,200 detainees in many of the country's places of detention (military camps, prisons and police stations). At the same time, the Tracing Agency workload remained at the same level as in previous months, about 20 tracing requests being filed daily at the ICRC offices. In the field of dissemination, several talks on international humanitarian law were given to members of the armed forces.

### **India**

In view of the clashes between various communities and political groups that have affected Kashmir since the beginning of the year, the ICRC asked the Indian authorities to allow its delegates to carry out an evaluation mission in the troubled province. Permission was received on 18 April; an ICRC delegate and doctor were in Srinagar from 25 April to 3 May. During their stay they established contacts with the local authorities, collected information on the situation in the Kashmir valley and assessed the needs of the civilian population. On their return to New Delhi the delegates informed the Indian authorities of their findings. The authorities are currently giving favourable consideration to a proposal to set up courses on war surgery for Kashmiri doctors and to provide support for the local branch of the National Society.

### **Nepal**

On 21 March an ICRC delegate based in new Delhi went to Katmandu to hand over to the authorities a memorandum outlining the institution's criteria for detention activities and explaining the procedure for visits to detainees. This followed a previous mission conducted in early February to discuss with the authorities the growing tension in the country.

On 8 April the ICRC sent a delegate to Katmandu, and later a doctor; they observed that a number of essential medicines were lacking in the capital's hospitals, which had admitted dozens of

wounded. A consignment of 600 kg of medicines was dispatched. At the end of the month the situation was more settled and the ICRC was preparing to make contact with the new government formed on 18 April.

## **Middle East**

### **Lebanon**

During the period under review, the ICRC continued its attempts to secure the release of its two delegates abducted in Sidon on 6 October 1989. At the end of April, despite the hopes raised by optimistic statements on the part of various leading Arab figures, the ICRC still had no news of Emanuel Christen and Elio Erriquez.

In Lebanon itself, the ICRC delegation carried on providing assistance to the victims of the conflict.

The fighting that broke out on 31 January 1990 between rival Christian factions in East Beirut and the surrounding area went on sporadically, despite the cease-fire concluded on 18 February.

Convoys leaving West Beirut succeeded in transporting medicines, medical supplies and fuel for generators to the hospitals and dispensaries in the eastern part of the city. During the night of 15 to 16 March, Lebanese Red Cross first-aid workers and an ICRC delegate accompanied 23 wounded to Larnaca, where the latter boarded a plane bound for Italy to receive appropriate treatment there.

As the clashes had left several thousand families homeless, the delegation organized food and blanket distributions to some 140,000 people. The delegates also continued visiting places of detention in Lebanon, where they saw more than 1,200 prisoners captured by both sides since the beginning of the fighting.

### **Israel**

On 6 March the ICRC delegation in Israel organized the repatriation of nine Lebanese nationals whose boat had been seized on 4 April 1989 in international waters.

### **Iraq**

In March and April, the ICRC delegation in Iran carried out its second annual series of visits to 12 camps holding prisoners of war captured during the eight years of conflict between Iran and Iraq. The

visits took place in accordance with the procedures laid down in the Third Geneva Convention. ICRC medical delegates also visited prisoners being treated in four hospitals near the camps.

In addition, delegates made regular visits to the El Tash camp for civilian internees—all Iranian Kurds, who are protected by the Fourth Geneva Convention.

## **Iran/Iraq**

The ICRC pursued its efforts on behalf of prisoners of war captured by both sides, proposing for instance that the Director of Operations go on mission to Tehran and Baghdad. The fact that both parties insisted that the mission not begin in their own country completely stalled the ICRC's dialogue with the Iranian and Iraqi governments on issues of fundamental importance such as the obligation, under the Third Geneva Convention, to repatriate wounded or sick prisoners and to grant the ICRC access to all prisoners, thus enabling it to register their names and check on their living conditions and treatment.

In mid-March, the ICRC repatriated 20 Egyptian prisoners captured by Iran during the Gulf war. ICRC delegates interviewed each of these prisoners without witnesses in Tehran the evening before their repatriation, to make sure that they were returning home of their own free will. The 20 Egyptians were accompanied by a delegate on a regular flight to Geneva, where they boarded another plane for Cairo. On 14 March, the ICRC handed the released prisoners over to the Egyptian authorities.

## **Yemen Arab Republic**

At the end of March the regional delegate for the Arabian Peninsula made the very first ICRC visit to persons detained at the Qasar al Basha'ir National Security Service interrogation centre in Sana'a.

## **Europe**

### **Romania**

Following the clashes that broke out in mid-March between ethnic Hungarians and Romanians in the city of Tirgu Mures, the ICRC delegation in Romania sent out a team of delegates who visited the hospitals where the victims were being treated and made a general survey



of the situation. They reached the conclusion that the city's medical infrastructure was sufficient to cover current needs. Seeing that tension was still running high, the ICRC broadcast a message on Romanian radio and television reminding the population that all wounded should be treated humanely and without discrimination and that the Red Cross emblem must be respected in all circumstances.

The ICRC continued visiting persons detained for security reasons all over the country, including prisoners already sentenced and those still awaiting trial. The delegates also went on distributing medical supplies to some 40 hospitals in the provincial capitals.

### **Yugoslavia**

From 6 March to early May, an ICRC team composed of two delegates, a doctor and two interpreters made a series of visits to detention centres in Yugoslavia. The delegates saw 289 persons detained for security reasons in 25 places of detention all over the country. The visits took place in accordance with the ICRC's customary criteria.

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# **IN THE RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT WORLD**

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## **World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day 1990**

### **JOINT MESSAGE OF THE LEAGUE OF RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT SOCIETIES AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS\***

Today is World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day. On this occasion, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the 149 National Societies and their 250 million members launch this appeal:

#### ***Protect human life and dignity***

In many parts of the world, the life and dignity of millions of women, men and children are threatened every day by armed conflicts and natural disasters.

It is impossible not to feel similar horror today at the arbitrary and senseless violence committed against so many people in the world.

It is impossible not to do everything in our power to protect life and to ease the suffering of those who, accidentally or unjustly, become the victims of natural disasters or man-made catastrophes.

In the name of all the people trapped in solitude and anguish, in their jail cells, hospitals, and camps for prisoners and refugees...

In the name of all those who are suffering from wounds, from the loss of a father or mother, of a husband, a wife, or a child, or who have seen in the ruins of their homes the loss of everything most dear to them...

In the name of all the forgotten victims of conflict and disaster, we call upon all citizens, peoples and governments of the world to:

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\* This message has been recorded by: Mr. Cornelio Sommaruga, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (speaking in *French, German and Italian*); Dr. Mario Villarreal Lander, President of the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (speaking in *Spanish*); Mr. Pär Stenbäck, Secretary General of the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (speaking in *English*); Dr. Ahmad Abu-Goura, Chairman of the Standing Commission of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (speaking in *Arabic*). The recording (on 7 1/2 reel tape or cassette) can be obtained from the Press Division of the International Committee of the Red Cross

### ***Protect human life and dignity***

The life of every human being is unique and irreplaceable. The life of every human being must be respected and protected against the ravages of man and nature. Without such values and universal principles, there is no proper human life, society or civilization.

This is the firm conviction of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

To protect human life and dignity worldwide, without regard to nationality, race, circumstance or political opinions and to do so regardless of influence or pressure, no matter where, no matter when.

This is the mission of our Movement. A mission founded on humanitarian principles and recognised by international law and customs.

Coming to the aid of people caught in the violence of armed conflict and other emergencies.

Visiting prisoners of war and other detainees, helping people to communicate with loved ones and reuniting families.

Helping people to face hurricanes, floods, fires, drought or other disasters that threaten individuals and their communities.

Saving in this way millions of lives through prevention, protection and assistance.

This is the daily work of the innumerable volunteers, delegates and leaders of the Red Cross and Red Crescent.

At a time when the opportunities for peace are so great, at a time when peoples are expressing with real determination their aspiration to freedom and fraternity.

***Let us refuse to accept the inevitability of suffering!  
Let us refuse to remain indifferent to conflicts and disasters!***

Let us build a common front for Humanity along with all those who believe that respect for human life and dignity should outweigh all other considerations.

***Let us choose humanity, and reject inhumanity!***

The International Red Cross and Red Cross Movement has already made this choice.

## Statutory meetings in Geneva

*(30 April-4 May 1990)*

### ● League Executive Council

The Executive Council of the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies held its XXVth session on 3 and 4 May 1990, under the chairmanship of Mr. Mario Villarroel Lander. In his opening speech, the League President reaffirmed his wish to work towards greater unity of action within the Movement by maintaining harmony between the League's statutory bodies and between the components of the Movement. He also emphasized the need to provide systematic training for National Society leaders and to continue closely co-operating with the Secretary General so as to improve the League Secretariat's ability to respond to the needs of National Societies.

ICRC President Mr. Cornelio Sommaruga was present at the opening session and briefly addressed the Council.

After hearing Secretary General Pär Stenbäck's report on the Secretariat's activities since October 1989, the Council adopted by consensus a plan of action, covering the years 1990-1991, for the implementation of the League's "Strategic Workplan for the 1990s", adopted by the General Assembly in 1989.

This plan includes some 50 projects classified according to three orders of priority, with a budget estimated at Sfrs. 4.295,000 for the first two years of implementation. A working group composed of the Chairmen of the League's various Commissions (Finance, Development, Disaster Relief, Youth and Health/Community Services) and four members elected in a personal capacity has been set up to monitor the plan's implementation and decide on the necessary working methods.

The delegates also adopted the report of the Finance Commission and were given information on activities carried out within the context of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR) and the plan of action on women in Red Cross/Red Crescent development, and on the work done by the bureaux of the League's four constitutional Commissions and by the Commission on the Red Cross, Red Crescent and Peace (including the World Campaign for the Protection of War Victims).

The Executive Council decided that its next session would be held on 23 and 24 October 1990 in Geneva.

- **Standing Commission for the Red Cross and Red Crescent**

The Standing Commission met on 1 May under the chairmanship of Dr. Ahmed Abu-Goura. It discussed various points of interest to the Movement and in particular the hosting of the Twenty-sixth International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent.

The Commission took note of the Colombian Red Cross' decision to renounce hosting the Twenty-sixth International Conference and of its proposal to host the Twenty-seventh International Conference. The Commission decided to inform the National Societies of Colombia's position, inviting them to make offers to host the Twenty-sixth International Conference in 1991 and requesting those interested to reply to the Secretariat of the Standing Commission not later than *30 June 1990*.

- **Commission on the Red Cross, Red Crescent and Peace**

The Commission on the Red Cross, Red Crescent and Peace held its XXVIIIth session on 30 April 1990, under the chairmanship of Mr. Alexandre Hay.

The Commission first of all took note of recent developments in connection with the World Campaign for the Protection of War Victims, which officially began in February 1990 with a colloquium on the protection of war victims (see *IRRC*, No. 275, March-April 1990, p. 144). The appeal launched by the colloquium will be widely distributed to the press in 1991 once thousands of signatures in support of the Campaign have been gathered from people from all walks of life, including members of the Movement.

The main objectives of the Campaign were confirmed (see also *IRRC*, No. 275, March-April 1990, p. 139). The Campaign's Steering Committee, chaired by Mr. Alexandre Hay, who recently succeeded Princess Christina of Sweden, will continue to supervise the smooth running of the Campaign, whilst an International Promotion Bureau set up by the ICRC and the League and headed jointly by Mr. George Reid from the League and Mr. Maurice Graber from the ICRC, assisted by a staff of about 10 people from both institutions, will ensure the co-ordination and promotion of Campaign activities.

The Steering Committee trusts that the National Societies will fulfil their commitment to support the Campaign by financing the running of this Promotion Bureau and by helping to secure the sponsors needed to organize the various events planned.

The Commission also heard a report on the initial activities of the *ad hoc* working group it appointed to reactivate the Movement's plan of action against racism and racial discrimination, pursuant to decision No. 3 reached by the Council of Delegates in 1985.

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### **Second Regional Symposium on International Humanitarian Law**

*(Kinshasa, 14-17 March 1990)*

This symposium, organized jointly by the ICRC regional delegation and the Faculty of Law of the University of Kinshasa, was held in the Zairian capital from 14 to 17 March 1990.

In 1988 the ICRC and the Faculty of Law of the University of Kinshasa had already organized a previous regional symposium on international humanitarian law, whose theme was the law of armed conflict and humanitarian activities.

This year's symposium, the second of this type held in Kinshasa, focused on the implementation of international humanitarian law (IHL).

Some 100 people attended the symposium. In addition to many students and professors of the University of Kinshasa, they included representatives of the National Societies of Zaire, the Congo and the Central African Republic, legal experts, government officials, members of the armed forces, judges, Zairian lawyers and representatives of non-governmental organizations.

Introductory papers on various aspects of the implementation of humanitarian law were delivered by professors from Zaire, the Congo, Burundi and the Central African Republic, and by members of the Red Cross of Zaire and the ICRC. The topics covered were the following:

- *"The implementation of IHL in peacetime"*, by D. Plattner, a member of the ICRC Legal Division;
- *"Sanctions under IHL"*, by Professor Mavila of the University of Brazzaville (Congo);
- *"Red Cross activities to promote the implementation of IHL"*, by M. S. Bompese, President of the Red Cross Society of Zaire;
- *"The implementation of IHL and the principle of the sovereignty of States"*, by Professor Niyungeko of the University of Bujumbura (Burundi);

- *"The suppression of breaches to IHL and the responsibilities it entails"*, by Colonel Akele, legal expert for the armed forces of Zaire;
- *"The dissemination of IHL in sub-Saharan Africa"*, by Professor Limbassa of the University of Bangui (Central African Republic), special advisor to the Ministry of Education;
- *"The role of the ICRC in the implementation of IHL"*, by D. Plattner;
- *"The relationship between IHL and human rights with respect to implementation"*, by Professor Bibombe of the University of Kinshasa.

Professor Mampuya, of the University of Kinshasa, then spoke on various general problems of IHL and Professor Bula-Bula, also of the University of Kinshasa, retraced the development of IHL since the adoption of the 1949 Geneva Conventions.

The papers were followed by lively discussions, demonstrating the participants' keen interest in the themes chosen and the practical implications thereof.

At the end of the seminar, the general report was read and a resolution adopted that "urges all States that have not yet done so to ratify the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 and their Additional Protocols, whose provisions aim to safeguard human life in every way possible...". The resolution also recommends that "the ICRC, universities, the armed forces, political circles and the mass media should increase their co-operative efforts to spread knowledge of IHL". It further expresses the hope that "national seminars will be organized in Central African States with a view to stepping up the promotion of international humanitarian law".

Following the seminar, Ms. Plattner gave a seven-day introductory course on IHL as part of the IHL curriculum at the Faculty of Law of the University of Kinshasa. About 50 students attended the course for two hours daily.



## **The Yemen Arab Republic ratifies the Protocols**

On 17 April 1990, the Yemen Arab Republic ratified the Protocols additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 and relating to the protection of victims of international (Protocol I) and non-international (Protocol II) armed conflicts, adopted in Geneva on 8 June 1977.

In accordance with their provisions, the Protocols will enter into force for the Yemen Arab Republic on 17 October 1990.

The Yemen Arab Republic is the **96th** State to become party to Protocol I and the **86th** to Protocol II.

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## **Death of Professor Paul Reuter**

The ICRC learned with great sadness of the death on 29 April 1990 of Professor Paul Reuter, who was 79 years old.

Professor Reuter was born in Metz (France) in 1911. After obtaining a doctorate at the Faculty of Law in Nancy, he took up an outstanding academic career, successively teaching at the Law Faculties of the Universities of Nancy, Poitiers, Aix en Provence and Paris and at the Graduate Institute for International Studies in Geneva, where he was appointed Associate Professor in 1985. He held a number of senior positions in the French Ministries of Information, Justice, National Defence and Foreign Affairs and represented the French government at meetings of international bodies such as the International Court of Justice. He also played a decisive role as an arbitrator on various commissions of regional and international organizations and in courts of arbitration and mediation committees. Paul Reuter became a member of the Institute of International Law in 1963 and of the United Nations International Law Commission in 1964.

Several generations of lawyers look to him as one of the twentieth century's greatest specialists on international law. The many books and articles he published on topics such as public international law, the law of treaties, international or European (e.g. coal and steel) organizations bear witness to his unquestionable expertise and are regarded as authoritative by academic and government circles alike.

Paul Reuter largely contributed to the dissemination of international humanitarian law and actively championed the cause of the ICRC, as shown by his generous donation to the institution in 1981. This has enabled it to set up the *Fund* and *Prize* bearing his name and, in accordance with his wishes, to encourage research in and the promotion of international humanitarian law.

The Paul Reuter Prize was awarded in 1985 and 1988 to two authors of major works devoted to international humanitarian law. The next award will take place in 1991.

The ICRC will honour the memory of one of the greatest humanists of our time by ensuring that the noble objectives of the *Paul Reuter Fund* continue to be upheld.

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### THE PROTECTION OF JOURNALISTS ON DANGEROUS ASSIGNMENTS IN AREAS OF ARMED CONFLICT

#### *Prestige and problems of reporting in wartime*

The journalist has always had a certain fascination for the general public. He supplies the proportion of dreams and adventures which we all need for our sustenance, whether consciously or not. He is the one who reveals an event to us, who puts us in direct touch with what is happening. As a result of radio and television, he has become a kind of member of the family.

The profession has its myths and its heroes among those who expose themselves to danger every day in areas of conflict or in the thick of natural disasters; it also has its martyrs. How many journalists have been deliberately rather than accidentally killed? Compared with the number of those arrested and released, how many have been imprisoned or have disappeared? Is the general public aware of this? There is no denying the facts. The journalist doing his job in a situation of armed conflict is in jeopardy. What is being done to protect him?

In her monumental work on the subject<sup>1</sup>, Sylvie Boiton-Malherbe has made a successful attempt to deal comprehensively with the problem of protecting journalists on dangerous assignments, to set forth the justification for doing so and in particular to assess, with the help of many case studies, the efforts of the international community since the 1930s to establish the legal foundations for such protection.

The author presents the problem straight away: in the form of tables and maps, she establishes a veritable memorial to those journalists who died in the exercise of their profession between 1968 and 1988, in their own countries and elsewhere, and then illustrates the types of coercive measures adopted against journalists on mission abroad.

Names, familiar and unfamiliar, catch our eye, and eloquent examples are given: imprisonment, kidnapping, disappearance, torture, taken hostage, sentenced to death by hanging. Some of the journalists mentioned were to recover their freedom; others never returned.

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<sup>1</sup> Sylvie Boiton-Malherbe, *La protection des journalistes en mission périlleuse dans les zones de conflit armé*, foreword by Jean Pictet, preface by Mario Bettati (Brussels, Bruylant, University of Brussels, 1989) XXV, 404 p., ill., tabl., fac-sim. (Collection de Droit international No. 23).

It is not easy to be a journalist when, to meet reporting needs, one has to move about in dangerous areas. His status as a reporter and a witness is, to say the least, ambiguous when he has to conceal his professional identity to track down the truth, the truth that his public is calling for and which does not always coincide with the "truth" of the powers that be! The author goes on to show that journalists have become the bad conscience of States, the more so in that "*l'explosion médiatique... a décuplé le risque qu'ils représentent*" ("the media explosion... has multiplied tenfold the danger that they represent") (p. 6).

With the help of relevant, and often striking, examples, the author examines the reasons put forward by States to justify their behaviour towards journalists: violations of domestic law ranging from a lack of courtesy, abuse of the authorities' good faith and defamation of the State to breaches of State security, i.e. subversion, espionage, and illegal frontier-crossing, with consequent accusations of spying and subversion. Such reasons are indeed well-founded if the State has been deliberately made the victim of reprehensible or illegal activities but, in many cases, the reasons are greatly exaggerated and drawn from legal quibbling which nonetheless gives every impression of being based on the law. What State would in fact risk failing to assert its claim, in the eyes of international public opinion, of being a State in which the rule of law prevails, and thereby jeopardize its position "*dans le marchandage politique international*" ("in international political bargaining"), to repeat one of the author's expressions? The author thus puts her finger on the role and the responsibilities of the journalist, a key figure on the international chessboard, and on the limits to the right of freedom of expression, which States do tend to interpret rather over-restrictively.

In part I, the author considers the legal foundations for the free circulation of information since the work of the League of Nations; the outlawing of misinformation and war propaganda as being conducive to tension; the establishment, in 1931, of a journalists' court of honour which emphasized the responsibility of journalists to promote peace; up to the 1948 United Nations Conference on freedom of expression. That Conference stated the principle of non-discrimination between foreign journalists and nationals of the host country, which marked the beginning of legal progress towards the right to freedom of expression enshrined in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

A further step forward was taken in 1978 by UNESCO, which reaffirmed that the exercise of freedom of opinion, expression and information was a vital factor in the strengthening of peace and international understanding and declared it essential that journalists be assured of protection guaranteeing them the best conditions for the exercise of their profession.

Besides the principles recognized by these various forums concerning the role of the journalist, in upholding the freedom of expression and opinion, the United Nations General Assembly in 1973, on the initiative of Maurice Schumann, Minister for Foreign Affairs of France, examined a draft convention intended to ensure the protection of journalists on dangerous assignments. The

draft in question provided for a legal status based on identification: an identity card establishing the journalist's right to bear a distinctive device, a black P on a gold field. The author points out that the draft convention was innovative in that it imposed on the State party a moral obligation, but she also indicates its limitations: by attracting the adversary's attention, the device might prove dangerous not only for the journalist himself but also for the civilian population surrounding him. She also demonstrates that *"toute tentative pour établir une protection de la fonction journalistique, par un contrôle de la personne qui l'exerce, conduit au dilemme constant du choix des limites à tracer entre son droit individuel, corollaire du droit des citoyens à la liberté d'expression, et le droit des Etats souverains de se protéger"* ("any attempt to establish protection for the journalist's profession, by controlling the person exercising it, leads to the ongoing dilemma of selecting the borders to be drawn between his individual rights, arising from the right of citizens to freedom of expression, and the right of sovereign States to protect themselves") (p. 130).

That draft convention was doomed to failure from the moment it became impossible to set limits to the right of freedom of expression which were acceptable to States in situations of conflict. By regarding the journalist on a dangerous assignment not as an obvious culprit or as a virtual defendant, but instead as a potential victim, the Conference on the Reaffirmation and Development of International Humanitarian Law (1974-1977) then succeeded in laying the legal foundations for the protection of the journalist.

The whole of part II of the work is devoted to the protection of journalists on dangerous assignments in terms of humanitarian law, and more particularly of Article 79 of Protocol I. By this article, the journalist has civilian status and is thus protected against abuse of power and the effects of hostilities. This protection establishes the journalist's mission as being to inform the public and not to take sides with any one party to the conflict.

The journalist does not of course enjoy a special status, such as that of medical staff, nor is he entitled to a protection emblem. Article 79 is not constituent but declaratory. Nevertheless, its originality arises from the fact that the reason for his protection is not linked to assisting the sick and wounded but to his information mission, which does not normally come within the ambit of humanitarian law. As the author puts it: *"D'une manière générale, le point commun entre le médecin et le journaliste est qu'ils se trouvent l'un et l'autre sur les lieux du combat, mais quand bien même le journaliste ne serait pas indispensable à la survie de la communauté, il lui est utile. En cela, il fait partie, au sein du droit de Genève, non pas des victimes, mais de ceux qui ne doivent pas le devenir"* ("Generally speaking, what is common to doctors and journalists is that they both find themselves in areas of combat, but even though the journalist would not be essential to the survival of the community he is useful to it. As such he belongs, within the law of Geneva, not to the victims but to those who should not become victims.") (p. 168).

The author also draws some interesting comparisons between war correspondents, journalists accredited to armed forces and freelance journalists on dangerous assignments, and demonstrates that the identity card, which according to Article 79.3 may be issued to journalists, is not a condition for protection but solely a presumption in favour of the journalist if arrested.

It is still left to the journalist's own discretion to obtain such a card, thus proving that the machinery for protection when on a dangerous assignment does not stem from the acknowledgement that the person concerned is a journalist, since such an acknowledgement is optional, but from the acknowledgement of the presumed journalist as being a civilian. And it is likewise as a civilian that the journalist on mission in a non-international conflict can benefit from the protection in particular of Article 13 of Protocol II.

What are we to think of Article 79 of Protocol I? "*Portée singulièrement limitée*" ("of very limited scope"), thinks Prof. Bettati in his preface to the work. In the view of Jean Pictet, the author of the foreword, it is a "*base modeste mais non négligeable*" ("modest but not negligible foundation"). For Sylvie Boiton-Malherbe, Article 79 reaffirms, first of all, a customary law rule which already existed in the Geneva Conventions of 1929 and 1949, namely the right to a civilian status of non-combatant journalists, but it also breaks new ground "en légitimant les missions professionnelles périlleuses pour un journaliste qui se rend dans des pays étrangers en guerre sans autorisation particulière des forces armées de ces pays, et sans contrôle de leur propre gouvernement" ("by legitimizing dangerous professional assignments for journalists who, in visiting foreign countries that are at war, make those visits without special authorization by the armed forces of those countries and without supervision by the said countries' Governments") (p. 213).

The article also establishes a normative link between humanitarian law and human rights law in that the humanitarian norm of the right to freedom of expression has been incorporated into humanitarian law. Article 79, by consolidating the principle of the free circulation of information and ideas, has helped the progress of law; it stresses the need to prevent armed conflicts and hence to disseminate knowledge of humanitarian law.

The author does not fail to mention the humanitarian steps taken by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in response to the disappearance, captivity or detention of journalists and describes what it has done to familiarize journalists with humanitarian law. Indeed, in the "planetary village" the role of the journalist is becoming more and more important and training for that role necessarily implies a knowledge of human rights and humanitarian law.

A lawyer, historian and sociologist, Sylvie Boiton-Malherbe has devised, structured and written her book with great variety of style: her rigorous and detailed legal analysis is lightened by the many case histories and commentaries that an experienced historian would not deny. Her love for elliptical

words and formulas is equalled only by her liking for the recapitulatory or explanatory synoptic tables which are interspersed throughout the work. Teachers and disseminators of humanitarian law will find this a valuable source of inspiration. The author has furthermore enriched her work with some twenty annexes and a detailed bibliography.

There can be no doubt that this is an important book.

*Jacques Meurant*

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# ADDRESSES OF NATIONAL RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT SOCIETIES

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- ALBANIA (Socialist People's Republic of) — Albanian Red Cross, Boulevard Marsel Kashen, *Tirana*.
- ALGERIA (People's Democratic Republic of) — Algerian Red Crescent, 15 bis, boulevard Mohamed V, *Algiers*.
- ANGOLA — Cruz Vermelha de Angola, Av. Hoji Ya Henda 107. 2. andar, *Luanda*.
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- AUSTRALIA — Australian Red Cross Society, 206, Clarendon Street, *East Melbourne 3002*.
- AUSTRIA — Austrian Red Cross, 3, Gusshausstrasse, Postfach 39, A-1041, *Vienne 4*.
- BAHAMAS — The Bahamas Red Cross Society, P.O. Box N-8331, *Nassau*.
- BAHRAIN — Bahrain Red Crescent Society, P.O. Box 882, *Manama*.
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- BARBADOS — The Barbados Red Cross Society, Red Cross House, Jemmotts Lane, *Bridgetown*.
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- BENIN (People's Republic of) — Red Cross of Benin, B.P. No. 1, *Porto-Novo*.
- BOLIVIA — Bolivian Red Cross, Avenida Simón Bolívar, 1515, *La Paz*.
- BOTSWANA — Botswana Red Cross Society, 135 Independence Avenue, P.O. Box 485, *Gaborone*.
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- BURKINA FASO — Burkina Be Red Cross Society, B.P. 340, *Ouagadougou*.
- BURUNDI — Burundi Red Cross, rue du Marché 3, P.O. Box 324, *Bujumbura*.
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- CAPE-VERDE (Republic of) — Cruz Vermelha de Cabo Verde, Rua Unidade-Guiné-Cabo Verde, P.O. Box 119, *Praia*.
- CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC — Central African Red Cross Society, B.P. 1428, *Bangui*.
- CHAD — Red Cross of Chad, B.P. 449, *N'Djamena*.
- CHILE — Chilean Red Cross, Avenida Santa Maria No. 0150, Correo 21, Casilla 246-V., *Santiago de Chile*.
- CHINA (People's Republic of) — Red Cross Society of China, 53, Ganmien Hutong, *Beijing*.
- COLOMBIA — Colombian Red Cross Society, Avenida 68, N.º 66-31, Apartado Aéreo 11-10, *Bogotá D.E.*
- CONGO (People's Republic of the) — Croix-Rouge congolaise, place de la Paix, B.P. 4145, *Brazzaville*.
- COSTA RICA — Costa Rica Red Cross, Calle 14, Avenida 8, Apartado 1025, *San José*.
- CÔTE D'IVOIRE — Croix-Rouge de Côte d'Ivoire, B.P. 1244, *Abidjan*.
- CUBA — Cuban Red Cross, Calle Calzada 51 Vedado, Ciudad Habana, *Habana 4*.
- CZECHOSLOVAKIA — Czechoslovak Red Cross, Thunovská 18, 118 04 *Prague 1*.
- DENMARK — Danish Red Cross, Dag Hammarskjölds Allé 28, Postboks 2600, 2100 *København Ø*.
- DJIBOUTI — Société du Croissant-Rouge de Djibouti, B.P. 8, *Djibouti*.
- DOMINICA — Dominica Red Cross Society, P.O. Box 59, *Roseau*.
- DOMINICAN REPUBLIC — Dominican Red Cross, Apartado postal 1293, *Santo Domingo*.
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- EGYPT (Arab Republic of) — Egyptian Red Crescent Society, 29, El Galaa Street, *Cairo*.
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- FJI — Fiji Red Cross Society, 22 Gorrie Street, P.O. Box 569, *Suva*.
- FINLAND — Finnish Red Cross, Tehtaankatu, 1 A, Box 168, 00141 *Helsinki 1415*.
- FRANCE — French Red Cross, 1, place Henry-Dunant, F-75384 *Paris*, CEDEX 08.
- GAMBIA — The Gambia Red Cross Society, P.O. Box 472, *Banjul*.
- GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC — German Red Cross of the German Democratic Republic, Kaitzer Strasse 2, DDR, 8010 *Dresden*.
- GERMANY, FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF — German Red Cross in the Federal Republic of Germany, Friedrich-Erbert-Allee 71, 5300, *Bonn 1*, Postfach 1460 (D.B.R.).
- GHANA — Ghana Red Cross Society, National Headquarters, Ministries Annex A3, P.O. Box 835, *Accra*.
- GREECE — Hellenic Red Cross, rue Lycavittou, 1, *Athens 10672*.
- GRENADA — Grenada Red Cross Society, P.O. Box 221, *St George's*.
- GUATEMALA — Guatemalan Red Cross, 3.ª Calle 8-40, Zona 1, *Ciudad de Guatemala*.
- GUINEA — The Guinean Red Cross Society, P.O. Box 376, *Conakry*.
- GUINEA-BISSAU — Sociedad Nacional da Cruz Vermelha de Guiné-Bissau, rua Justino Lopes N.º 22-B, *Bissau*.
- GUYANA — The Guyana Red Cross Society, P.O. Box 10524, Eve Leary, *Georgetown*.
- HAITI — Haitian National Red Cross Society, place des Nations Unies. (Bicentenaire), B.P. 1337, *Port-au-Prince*.



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- HUNGARY — Hungarian Red Cross, V. Arany János utca, 31, *Budapest 1367*. Mail Add.: *1367 Budapest St. Pf. 121*.
- ICELAND — Icelandic Red Cross, Raudararstigur 18, 105 *Reykjavik*.
- INDIA — Indian Red Cross Society, 1, Red Cross Road, *New-Dehli 110001*.
- INDONESIA — Indonesian Red Cross Society, Il Jend Gatot subroto Kar. 96, Jakarta Selatan 12790, P.O. Box 2009, *Jakarta*.
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- ITALY — Italian Red Cross, 12, via Toscana, 00187 *Rome*.
- JAMAICA — The Jamaica Red Cross Society, 76, Arnold Road, *Kingston 5*.
- JAPAN — The Japanese Red Cross Society, 1-3, Shiba-Daimon, 1-chome, Minato-Ku, *Tokyo 105*.
- JORDAN — Jordan National Red Crescent Society, P.O. Box 10001, *Ammán*.
- KENYA — Kenya Red Cross Society, P.O. Box 40712, *Nairobi*.
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- KUWAIT — Kuwait Red Crescent Society, P.O. Box 1359 Safat, *Kuwait*.
- LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC — Lao Red Cross, B.P. 650, *Vientiane*.
- LEBANON — Lebanese Red Cross, rue Spears, *Beirut*.
- LESOTHO — Lesotho Red Cross Society, P.O. Box 366, *Maseru 100*.
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- LIBYAN ARAB JAMAHIRIYA — Libyan Red Crescent, P.O. Box 541, *Benghazi*.
- LIECHTENSTEIN — Liechtenstein Red Cross, Heiligkreuz, 9490 *Vaduz*.
- LUXEMBOURG — Luxembourg Red Cross, Parc de la Ville. B.P. 404, *Luxembourg 2*.
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- MALI — Mali Red Cross, B.P. 280, *Bamako*.
- MAURITANIA — Mauritanian Red Crescent, B.P. 344, aneue Gamal Abdel Nasser, *Nouakchott*.
- MAURITIUS — Mauritius Red Cross Society, Ste Thérèse Street, *Curepipe*.
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- MONACO — Red Cross of Monaco, 27 boul. de Suisse, *Monte Carlo*.
- MONGOLIA — Red Cross Society of Mongolia, Central Post Office, Post Box 537, *Ulan Bator*.
- MOROCCO — Moroccan Red Crescent, B.P. 189, *Rabat*.
- MOZAMBIQUE — Cruz Vermelha de Moçambique, Caixa Postal 2986, *Maputo*.
- MYANMAR (The Union of) — Myanmar Red Cross Society, 42, Strand Road, *Yangon*.
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- NETHERLANDS — The Netherlands Red Cross, P.O.B. 28120, 2502 KC *The Hague*.
- NEW ZEALAND — The New Zealand Red Cross Society, Red Cross House, 14 Hill Street, *Wellington 1*. (P.O. Box 12-140, *Wellington Thorndon*.)
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- NIGER — Red Cross Society of Niger, B.P. 11386, *Niamey*.
- NIGERIA — Nigerian Red Cross Society, 11 Eko Akete Close, off St. Gregory's Rd., P.O. Box 764, *Lagos*.
- NORWAY — Norwegian Red Cross, P.O. Box 6875, St. Olavspl. N-0130 *Oslo 1*.
- PAKISTAN — Pakistan Red Crescent Society, National Headquarters, Sector H-8, *Islamabad*.
- PANAMA — Red Cross Society of Panama, Apartado Postal 668, *Panamá 1*.
- PAPUA NEW GUINEA — Papua New Guinea Red Cross Society, P.O. Box 6545, *Boroko*.
- PARAGUAY — Paraguayan Red Cross, Brasil 216, esq. José Berges, *Asunción*.
- PERU — Peruvian Red Cross, Av. Camino del Inca y Nazarenas, Urb. Las Gardenias — Surco — Apartado 1534, *Lima*.
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- POLAND — Polish Red Cross, Mokotowska 14, 00-950 *Warsaw*.
- PORTUGAL — Portuguese Red Cross, Jardim 9 Abril, 1 a 5, 1293 *Lisbon*.
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- RWANDA — Rwandese Red Cross, B.P. 425, *Kigali*.
- SAINT LUCIA — Saint Lucia Red Cross, P.O. Box 271, *Castries St. Lucia, W. I.*
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- SOMALIA (Democratic Republic) — Somali Red Crescent Society, P.O. Box 937, *Mogadishu*.

- SOUTH AFRICA** — The South African Red Cross Society, Essanby House 6th Floor, 175 Jeppe Street, P.O.B. 8726, *Johannesburg 2000*.
- SPAIN** — Spanish Red Cross, Eduardo Dato, 16, *Madrid 28010*.
- SRI LANKA** (Dem. Soc. Rep. of) — The Sri Lanka Red Cross Society, 106, Dharmapala Mawatha, *Colombo 7*.
- SUDAN** (The Republic of the) — The Sudanese Red Crescent, P.O. Box 235, *Khartoum*.
- SURINAME** — Suriname Red Cross, Gravenberchstraat 2, Postbus 2919, *Paramaribo*.
- SWAZILAND** — Baphalali Swaziland Red Cross Society, P.O. Box 377, *Mbabane*.
- SWEDEN** — Swedish Red Cross, Box 27 316, 102-54 *Stockholm*.
- SWITZERLAND** — Swiss Red Cross, Rainmattstrasse 10, B.P. 2699, 3001 *Berne*.
- SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC** — Syrian Arab Red Crescent, Bd Mahdi Ben Barake, *Damascus*.
- TANZANIA** — Tanzania Red Cross National Society, Upanga Road, P.O.B. 1133, *Dar es Salaam*.
- THAILAND** — The Thai Red Cross Society, Paribatra Building, Central Bureau, Rama IV Road, *Bangkok 10330*.
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- USA** — American Red Cross, 17th and D. Streets, N.W., *Washington, D.C. 20006*.
- URUGUAY** — Uruguayan Red Cross, Avenida 8 de Octubre 2990, *Montevideo*.
- U.R.S.S** — The Alliance of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of the U.S.S.R., I. Tcheremushkinskii proezd 5, *Moscow, 117036*.
- VENEZUELA** — Venezuelan Red Cross, Avenida Andrés Bello, N.º 4, Apartado, 3185, *Caracas 1010*.
- VIET NAM** (Socialist Republic of) — Red Cross of Viet Nam, 68, rue Ba-Triêu, *Hanoi*.
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- YUGOSLAVIA** — Red Cross of Yugoslavia, Simina ulica broj 19, 11000 *Belgrade*.
- ZAIRE** — Red Cross Society of the Republic of Zaire, 41, av. de la Justice, Zone de la Gombe, B.P. 1712, *Kinshasa*.
- ZAMBIA** — Zambia Red Cross Society, P.O. Box 50 001, 2837 Saddam Hussein Boulevard, Longacres, *Lusaka*.
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